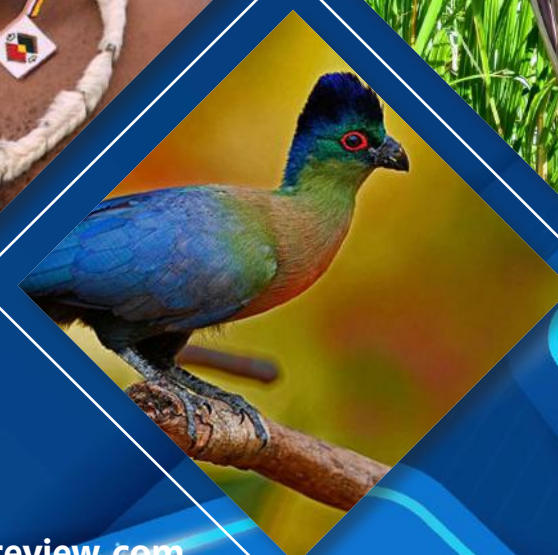
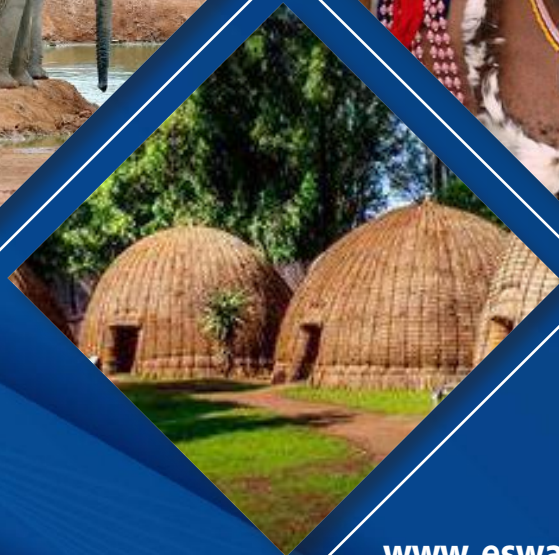


2022/23

# Eswatini Review

AN OVERVIEW OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI'S ECONOMY



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# FOREWORD

by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade

***The Government of Eswatini (GoE) is pleased to announce that despite the unfavourable circumstances visited upon the Kingdom by COVID-19, it was nevertheless able to realise 49 new Foreign Direct and Domestic investments along with 11 381 employment opportunities. These welcome reversals in fortune from a scenario hallmarked by 1 702 job redundancies were witnessed in sectors such as Retail, Banking and Finance, Property Development and Real Estate, Transport Infrastructure, Storage and Distribution, Logistics, and others.***

The country was prior to COVID-19 experiencing key challenges, so the pandemic exacerbated an already fragile economic situation. Government responded with the Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan (ERP), this to address the impact of the pandemic on Eswatini's economy by creating opportunities for income-generation and wealth-creation in key priority sectors. The purpose of the ERP is to resuscitate the economy and reignite economic growth through high-impact, private-sector-led projects.

The ERP does however not override in-place Development Plans and Strategies towards achievement of the country's Development Vision 2022, which include The Kingdom of Eswatini Strategic Roadmap, The National Development Strategy and Development Plan, and The Strategy for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth. Instead, the Post-COVID-19 ERP is a high-impact economic stimulus that will resuscitate the economy by igniting a large number of productive economic initiatives. In other words, it is meant to boost the number of viable and profitable economic activities - as well as accelerate the implementation and delivery of the National Development Programmes - in order for Eswatini to make significant strides towards achieving Vision 2022 and implantation of the strategic room.

The ERP is necessary in order to generate sufficient momentum for our economy to attain a high speed of economic production and productivity: it will trigger initiatives that will in the medium and long term be able to overcome the social and economic losses imposed by the pandemic. Through this Recovery Plan, the GoE intends to increase employment opportunities, expand the tax-base and restore the viability and sustainability of the Eswatini economy. Much of what is proposed will support the GoE's goal to reverse the decline in economic activities, will enhance productive sectors of the economy, and will create jobs as well as restore the economy into a much higher level of production and productivity.

Would-be investors can rest assured in the knowledge that the country remains a competitive investment destination in Southern Africa, offering a gateway to the rest of Africa and the world by virtue of its good road network, long-established, trusted rail infrastructure, and extensive array of

trade agreements: the latter encompass Southern Africa via the SADC, East Africa through COMESA, the rest of the continent through AfCFTA, the western world via AGOA and the Asian market by means of an Economic Cooperation Agreement with Taiwan. Eswatini's labour force is among the most educated in the region, and its provision of essential requirements such as water and electricity - along with operating facilities and regulatory support - is reliable.

We are striving tirelessly towards our long-term vision of being an export-led economy with a strength in manufacturing, all the while working on growing our GDP, encouraging commercial activity for the creation of jobs, and engaging in big projects that will see the GoE empowering the private sector to engage in high-value and high-impact interventions, thereby achieving the just-mentioned priorities around GDP and jobs. We are also taking decisions today that will see us grow steadily into the future by putting in place sustainable regulatory reforms, such as shifting away from the State as the central driver of the economy to a more private-sector-led economy where the Government re-establishes itself as a key enabler for growth across all sectors. The GoE perseveres with the establishment of new industrial estates, and the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority offers a comprehensive one-stop service.

The pages that follow ably demonstrate that the geographically small yet surprisingly varied, picture-perfect and culturally enthralling Kingdom of Eswatini is both a 'hidden gem' for the globetrotter and a potentially ideal base for the visionary entrepreneur. Come and see for yourself, our friendly nation looks forward to extending you a warm welcome!

**Senator Manqoba Khumalo**  
**Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade**



# INTRODUCTION

*Emaswati are descendants of the Bantu who originated in the Benue-Cross region of West Africa. After migrating to the Great Lakes in the 15th century, the Bantu Swati headed further east-southeast before following the Indian Ocean coastline into present-day Mozambique. The nation's forerunners then ventured inland, thus beginning the modern history of the Kingdom of Eswatini.*

After conquering neighbouring chiefdoms and kingdoms characterised by the Sotho Nguni tribes, Emaswati employed diplomacy and arranged marriages to create strategic alliances with neighbouring states. In the 1820s to 1840s, the use of regiments in warfare again rose to prominence when the entire Southern African region underwent radical state-building, fuelled by the reign of King Shaka of the Zulu. White adventurers and fortune-hunters began arriving in Eswatini during the 1840s, leading to Boer and British vying for administrative domination of the kingdom. The Lion of Eswatini – King Sobhuza II – was born while these powers were engaged in the Anglo-Boer War, at the conclusion of which Britain began its 66-year rule of Eswatini as a Protectorate. Immediately upon his coming-of-age, the young monarch began his quest to recover land belonging to Emaswati which, it was claimed by Colonial concession holders of the time, had been ceded to them by earlier royal decree.

King Sobhuza II ascended to the throne on 20 December 1921. He led his people during the Colonial era and showed unwavering support for the British during the course of the Second World War: post-war projects created by the Commonwealth Development Corporation included the establishment of the Mhlume Sugar Estates which were meant to help Swati veterans integrate back into civilian life. When the war ended, negotiations with Britain for self-rule were initiated and finally culminated in the granting of Independence on 6 September 1968. Sobhuza II was crowned King and Ngwenyama of an Independent Eswatini through instruments handed over by George Thompson, who represented the British Queen at a colourful ceremony in the Somhlolo National Stadium.

The kingdom inherited a Constitution that Emaswati deemed unsuited to their traditional criteria. Westminster had acceded in part to certain constitutional changes suggested by King Sobhuza II, but these modifications never found full acceptance and the Constitution was consequently suspended. This freed the kingdom to pursue and refine the system of a National and Inner Council in consultation with local chiefs. The son of King Sobhuza II – the future King Mswati III – was born on 19 April 1968 as Prince Makhosetive. The Lion of

Eswatini ruled until his death in 1982, making him the longest-reigning monarch in the country's history, and was on 25 April 1986 succeeded by his son and current monarch, His Majesty King Mswati III.

The latter on 26 July 2005 ratified a new Constitution that is the supreme law of the land and which provides for three, mutually independent arms of government – the Executive, a bicameral Legislature and the Judiciary. The kingdom's Tinkhundla (Constituencies)–based electoral system is democratic and participatory: it emphasises devolution of power from central government to Tinkhundla areas, and individual merit as a basis for election or appointment to public office. On 19 April 2018 – the King's 50th birthday in the country's Independence Golden Jubilee year – His Majesty rewrote the history books and world atlas by telling a large '50/50 Celebration' gathering in Manzini that the country's name was no longer Swaziland, but Eswatini.

## DEEP-ROOTED CULTURE

The monarchy and people of this, the smallest country in the Southern Hemisphere, proudly embrace and preserve ancient, unique traditions that find expression across every aspect of life, from day-to-day domestic activities to gatherings where tens of thousands celebrate and further engrain the nation's cultural heritage. Visitors are thanks to Emaswati's hallmark friendliness welcomed into homes and royal arenas alike, even to witness parts of the most esoteric ceremony.

## INCWALA

This is Eswatini's most important cultural event: a ceremony that has endured for hundreds of years, it is one of the last remaining examples of what was common practice in many African countries. Although often translated as 'First Fruits Festival', essentially it is about cleansing, renewal and celebrating kingship. Incwala takes place around the last week of December/first week of January, the dates deriving from ancestral astrology. Visitors with a genuine interest in Swati culture may attend Incwala, subject to stringent conditions: most recommended is Day Four, when the feasting and dancing reach a climax and thousands of people, including warriors in full battle-regalia, throng the



The National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) was established three decades ago in the Kingdom of Eswatini and is mandated with facilitating access to markets for local small holder farmers.

NAMBoard offers refrigerated transport, cold storage facilities, tunnels, quality controls and marketing extension services to local farmers which ensures that they meet world standards.

Produce procured from smallholder growers is marketed and distributed through two of the organisation's subsidiary brands: Encabeni Fresh Produce and Sdemane Farming.



#### **ENCABENI FRESH PRODUCE**

Encabeni Fresh Produce is well positioned to supply both domestic and regional markets. As a dominant player in the local market space, Encabeni Fresh Produce boasts a local market share of 60%. Produce from the market is supplied to the Country's leading supermarket chains, fresh produce markets, walk-in clients, restaurants, hotels and canteens.

#### **ENCABENI FRESH PRODUCE PROUCT OFFERING:**

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| • Butternut    | • Green Pepper |
| • Sweet Potato | • Beetroot     |
| • Cabbage      | • Carrots      |
| • Lettuce      | • Potato       |
| • Onion        | • Banana       |
| • Tomato       |                |



#### **SDEMANE FARMING**

Sdemane Farming is Eswatini's leading exporter of high-quality baby vegetables and speciality crops. Sdemane Farming is able to guarantee a continuous supply to its markets throughout the year. This is because; Sdemane sources from small scale farmers who are located in the different climatic regions of Eswatini.

With a customer base in SADC and Europe, and most recently the Middle East and Mauritania, Sdemane Farming is looking to expand.

#### **SDEMANE FARMING PRODUCT OFFERING**

- Baby Brinjal
- Baby Cabbage
- Baby Corn

- Baby Gem
- Baby Fennel
- Baby Leeks
- Baby Marrow
- Chillies
- Patty Pan
- Red Cabbage
- Savoy Cabbage
- Carrots

Food safety standards are the core of our daily operations. Our packhouses are HACCP certified and our farming operation subscribe to Global GAP standards.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**



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Aerial view of King Sobhuza II Memorial Park, Lobamba, Eswatini



parade grounds. Taking photos is by special permit only – but never of the King's private sanctuary – and the songs, dances and rituals that take place inside the Royal Kraal may not be recorded or written down, as they remain a matter of utmost secrecy. Respect for total privacy is required on special days, men should not wear hats or headgear that is not traditional, women should wear skirts or sarongs, and shoes should not be worn in the dance arena.

#### SEQUENCE OF THE BIG INCWALA:

- **Day One** – Under the full moon, unmarried male youths accompanied by Emabutfo (male regiments) set off from Engabezweni Royal Residence and march 50 km to cut branches of the sacred shrub, lusekwane.
- **Day Two** – They place their lusekwane branches in the national cattle byre. The elders weave these branches in between poles of the Inhlambelo (the King's private sanctuary).
- **Day Three** – In the morning, young boys cut branches of the black imbondvo (red bush-willow), which are added to the Inhlambelo. In the afternoon, the lusekwane youths catch and overpower a bull and take it to the sanctuary.
- **Day Four** – The key players perform in a spectacular pageant inside the cattle byre; His Majesty and the regiments appear in full war-dress and dance to a number of songs. He then throws the Luselwa (sacred gourd), which is caught on a black shield by one of the lusekwane boys.
- **Day Five** – His Majesty sits in seclusion in the Great Hut while bemanti (disciplinarians) roam the royal capital during daytime, enforcing the rules of this Day of Abstinence.
- **Day Six** – The regiments march to a forest and return with firewood. The elders prepare in the centre of the cattle byre a bonfire on which certain objects are burned to signify the end of the old year, while the key players sing and dance around it. The King remains in seclusion until the next full moon, when the lusekwane branches are removed and burned.

#### UMHLANGA

The epic-scale Umhlanga (Reed Dance) Celebration – watched each year by a multitude of spectators and beamed to a global television audience – takes place on the seventh day of what is a deeply significant cultural practice. Recent years have witnessed an exponential increase in terms of grandeur, participation and attendance: based on local media coverage, over 100 000 maidens now dance before His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, members of the royal family and special guests, while the Eswatini Tourism Authority reports in excess of 45 000 visitor-arrivals in the country during the extravaganza's main four days, inclusive.

The celebration is in essence a weeklong opportunity for Swati maidens to pay homage to and work for the continued wellbeing, comfort and happiness of Her Majesty the Queen Mother, or Indlovukasi (She-Elephant): the reeds they cut replace those of the previous year that encircle her dwelling at the main royal residence as a symbolic means of protection against the elements. Only childless, unmarried girls and young women aged between eight and 22 take part, and this tradition focuses on encouraging them to abstain from intimate relations until they are considered old enough for marriage.

Commencement of the reed-cutting is determined by a combination of the plants' maturity at winter's end and the lunar cycle, thus usually in late August or early September, but never in accordance with the Western calendar. Before the girls set out, HM the Queen Mother is because of her prowess in traditional dancing and royal protocol automatically elected their leader: she then names one of the princesses to be her representative 'in the field'.

#### SEQUENCE OF UMHLANGA:

- Day one sees the girls gather at their respective chiefdoms to receive advice from community elders and be provided with up to four male protectors for the duration of the event. Trucks ferry these parties to Ludzidzini Royal Residence where the girls arrive in groups of 200 or more and are allocated accommodation, either in the huts of relatives who live in the royal villages or in classrooms of the four nearby schools.

- On day two the girls walk to Ngabezweni, a palace at which they are met by His Majesty King Mswati III who blesses them in preparation for the journey and task which they are about to undertake. After being divided into two, age-determined groups – eight to 13 and 14 to 22 – the maidens make their way to two separate, pre-selected destinations: they arrive after nightfall and sleep in government-provided tents near the reed-beds.
- Day three is spent cutting the reeds and tying them into bundles, each consisting of an even number, as odd numbers are thought to bring misfortune on the royal family.
- On the morning of day four, the groups return to Ngabezweni before delivering their bounty to the Queen Mother in the afternoon. Later, they are required to walk to the royal residence by night to symbolise 'having travelled far'.
- Day five is given over to relaxing, going into town for a shopping spree and finalising hairstyles and costumes for the dance.
- Day six sees the maidens ferried by government vehicles to the royal residence for placing of the reeds, then making their way on foot to the main arena in snake-formation, dancing in their groups that each sings a different song, all simultaneously.
- The seventh day is when the main event takes place: the maidens are in their best traditional attire, spectators have gathered in their thousands and the world's cameras are rolling. Princesses lead the line of groups into the grounds and present them to Their Majesties, with HM King Mswati III customarily delivering a speech to his subjects on topics such as morality and unity. Guest speakers are frequently featured in the programme. Thereafter, song-and-dance is the order of the day and night.

## BUGANU

The Baganu (marula-fruit liquor) Festival is a time of good cheer and goodwill that the nation believes could appeal to ever more tourists, especially adventurous, party-loving travellers seeking to escape the Northern Hemisphere winter. Held in late

February, Baganu centres around a pair of spectator-packed ceremonies – usually a fortnight apart – held in the arenas of two royal residences, at Buhleni in the Hhohho region's northwest, and at Hlane in the Lubombo region's northeast, respectively. Akin to the Umhlanga but involving adults from Lutsango (women's regiments), their tribute – in this case home-brewed marula liquor – is also formally offered to HM the Queen Mother. Her acceptance and Their Majesties' blessing thereof gives the green light for a nationwide party to begin.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the Baganu Festival has been showing a significant year-on-year increase in the number of visitors who come from abroad to watch and participate. This impacts positively on not only the atmosphere created by thousands of Emaswati from all parts of the country, but also delivers a major boost to the economy: accommodation facilities in and around both venues are frequently fully booked for the two-week duration, and vendors who come in their droves to set up stands selling traditional attire, ethnic artefacts, indigenous food and so on, are reporting ever better-than-usual business.

At Buhleni Royal Residence, His Majesty King Mswati III told Lutsango members and the audience that the arena was now too small to cater for the ever-growing numbers of both, and needed to be enlarged. At Hlane a fortnight later he declared that the Baganu Festival clearly had the potential to attract even greater numbers of foreign tourists: expanding on sentiments expressed in the local media that, with dedicated and single-pointed marketing, Eswatini could stage a visitor-magnet akin to Germany's Oktoberfest and the other great harvest-related celebrations in Europe and the UK, the King suggested that a delegation of locals be sent to these massively successful festivals to observe and then apply what they learnt to elevating Baganu to 'spectacular' status.

Fruit on the Eswatini lowveld's estimated one million marula trees – which the nation believes are more revered than those occurring elsewhere in Southern and Central Africa – begins to ripen and fall during early February. In accordance with age-old tradition it is gathered by women and children and stored until fully ripe and of a creamy-yellow colour. The fruits are

then crushed and de-pitted by the womenfolk before being placed in sugar-water to ferment: no artificial colouring, flavouring or preservatives are employed. The quite potent Baganu that results is sometimes translated as marula beer or wine.

Once the festival's starting date has been divined and decreed, truckloads of brew, most in 25-litre containers, are collected from throughout the lowveld's rural areas and taken to Buhleni Royal Residence for Lutsango to present to the Queen Mother on the Friday afternoon. The ceremony proper gets under way on Saturday afternoon and sees Her Majesty and the female regiments engage in traditional dancing until after dark, at which point the King and the male regiments join in. These festivities continue throughout the night, and on Sunday the regiments disperse and the surplus baganu is distributed. The entire process is then repeated – on either the following weekend or the one thereafter – at Hlane Royal Residence in the northern reaches of the Lubombo region.

Emaswati regard the festival as a means to get in touch with their culture. A senior Lutsango member was famously quoted as saying that because Umhlanga is for maidens and Incwala focuses on men, without the Baganu gathering, Swati women could lose their culture bit by bit and the songs for Lutsango would be forgotten. She said that harvest contributions made to events graced by Their Majesties – a devotional practice since the time of the nation's forefathers – serve to teach the coming generations. The consensus among foreign visitors has consistently supported the view that the Baganu Festival is a unique, undiluted, un-commercialised event that provides an exciting experience of authentic, centuries-old African tradition.

## COMPACT LANDSCAPES

Eswatini is the smallest country in the southern hemisphere, covering just more than 17 000 sq km and with a limited area of 193 km from north to south and 145 km from east to west. Bordered by provinces of South Africa on the north, west and south, and Mozambique on the east, the tiny kingdom wherein altitudes range between 120 and almost 2 000 metres above sea level presents a mosaic of vistas and climates. With the exception of beach and desert

– which occur in the neighbouring countries – the kingdom's geography is a microcosm of Africa's widely varied and scenic terrain. Many significant geological, archaeological and anthropological finds have been and continue to be made.

Eswatini's four distinct geographical regions are each hallmarked by unique landforms, vegetation and weather patterns.

- **Highveld:** This westernmost, mountainous and forested belt with an average altitude of 1 300m is divided by many rivers, valleys and gorges.
- **Middleveld:** The adjacent, undulating region is dominated by lush, fertile valleys within which, thanks the warmer and drier climate that prevails, most of Eswatini's agricultural activities take place.
- **Lowveld:** Expansive and characterised by typical, dense African bush abundant in indigenous wildlife and flora, this area facilitates intensive cattle farming along with the cultivation of two prime export crops.
- **Lubombo:** An escarpment that traverses the eastern length of the lowveld with an average altitude of 600m, this small, mixed-farming area separates the kingdom from Mozambique's coastal plain. Eswatini's three main rivers have created deep gorges here en route to the Indian Ocean.

Administrative districts consist of Manzini, Hhohho, Shiselweni and Lubombo, while local government operations include the city councils of Mbabane and Manzini, and the town councils of Ezulwini, Piggs Peak, Nhlengano and Siteki. A number of diplomatic missions are resident in Eswatini, along with consular offices.

## SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

**Mbabane** was at the turn of the 20th century established as the British colonial administration's headquarters on account of the mild, temperate climate afforded by its 1 200m altitude. Set amid the scenic highveld's Dlangeni Hills, panoramic views extend far eastward across the Ezulwini Valley.

The city is today the base of almost all government ministries and departments, as well as the majority



**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021 - 24**

# Digitalized and data driven; with our partners

Delivering utmost value to stakeholders and maximising domestic revenue mobilisation in an evolving landscape of a dynamic economy requires the use of innovative and technologically adept techniques. Accordingly, to effectively deliver on its mandate, the strategic plan for the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 focuses on digitalizing operations and transforming decision-making from an intuitive to a data-driven manner to attain the ultimate vision of a 100% voluntary compliance for a better Kingdom of Eswatini.

To kickstart the development of the new strategic plan, a rigorous stakeholder consultation process and a scientific scanning of the

environment was undertaken and this unearthed three obstacles that hinder the organisation from achieving optimal efficiency, namely;

(a) a non-conducive organisational culture that is weak in essential elements such as performance excellence, innovation and meaningful relationships;  
(b) poor divisional integration, interdependence and coordination;  
(c) a weak revenue collection system that is anchored on manpower. To address these hindrances and in turn ensure the ERS achieves optimal efficiency and attain its vision, the strategic plan is modelled around four strategic focus areas which birthed strategic objectives based on redressing the identified obstacles, namely: (a) to develop an integrated and

# Ultimate intent - 100% voluntary compliance for a better Kingdom of Eswatini

coordinated system that will maximise efficiency of the ERS;

(b) to create an ERS culture where we live by our values;

(c) to develop an intelligent revenue collection and;

(d) to bring about the changes required in order for the ERS to fully align with legislative provisions.

These strategic objectives were then translated to strategic programmes, each with a detailed action plan and aim to reach our three-year goal, which is “81.1% voluntary compliance, through being digitalised and data driven with our partners.” This is our first milestone to the ultimate intent of 100% voluntary compliance.

The strategy is executed through the aforementioned programmes. ERS’s operations are run through business processes grouped in five systems (manage revenue collection, support, risk, transformation and customer) and this is how we deliver on our mandate. In essence, operations run the organisation whilst strategy changes it. The matrix (on the table) shows the effect that we envision the strategy will have on our operational systems. The expected outcomes transcend across all the five systems to varying degrees.

| STRATEGY PROGRAMMES                           | SYSTEMS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |         |      |                |          |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|----------------|----------|
|                                               | Revenue Collection                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Support | Risk | Transformation | Customer |
| <b>Integrated and coordinated system.</b>     | Convergence on purpose.<br>Relevant and unified feedback channels.<br>Holistic risk management approach.<br>Relevant integrated thinking and insights.<br>Productive employees.                                                                                                   |         |      |                |          |
| <b>Value driven culture.</b>                  | Value driven leadership and teams.<br>Healthy organisational dynamics.<br>Engaged employees.<br>Excellence driven.<br>Healthy professional relationship.<br>Improved Performance.<br>Community of practice.                                                                       |         |      |                |          |
| <b>Intelligent revenue collection system.</b> | Relevance.<br>Increased voluntary compliance.<br>Ease of movement of goods.<br>Enhanced stakeholder relations, engagements and collaboration.                                                                                                                                     |         |      |                |          |
| <b>Statutory Compliance</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Compliance by the Organisation</li> <li>• Reduced costs of collecting non-tax government revenue</li> <li>• Reduced citizen costs of access to government services</li> <li>• Positive public image from service culture</li> </ul> |         |      |                |          |

The Governing Board owns and is accountable for the ERS strategy. The ERS EXCO team will manage and execute this strategy, whose period began on 01 April 2021 and will end on 31 March 2024.

of diplomatic representatives. Media houses produce the local newspapers here and it is the seat of domestic television and radio. A high standard of office space is offered, while industrial zones are located just beyond the city centre.

Shopping facilities are excellent, highlighted by a large plaza and two shopping malls with modern retail outlets, fashionable boutiques, commercial banks and supermarkets. Mbabane is close to renowned hotels and international resort complexes that offer every leisure facility expected by the sophisticated traveller. Its original residential areas boast impressive, long-established homes, while housing trends in the rapidly growing new suburbs vary from apartment- and townhouse-enclaves to large, single residences. A pleasant city set in picture-postcard surrounds, Mbabane offers a full spectrum of educational, social and sporting facilities.

#### HUB OF COMMERCE

**Manzini**, the largest city in the most densely populated region, is ideally situated in the middleveld about 40 km from Mbabane. Because of this central location it witnessed the pioneering economic activities of Eswatini and remains the most convenient trading area serving all four regions.

Manzini was originally called Bremersdorp after the local businessman who opened a small trading store here in 1885. It served as Eswatini's first capital and has grown from small town to small city. This hub of trade and distribution functions as the country's principal commercial and industrial centre, with all national transport networks converging here.

Formal sector commercial activities are concentrated in the Central Business District which features a well-developed infrastructure efficiently meeting all growing commercial and industrial demands. Services include transport access, financial, retail and wholesale outlets, tourism and leisure facilities. Reasonably priced residential, business and industrial sites are available. With the Mzimnene River flowing through the city, Manzini is attractive not only as a residential area but also as a tourist magnet. Healthcare facilities of the highest order are close at hand, as are premier seats of higher education along with teacher training colleges and industrial/business training centres.

#### HIVE OF INDUSTRY

**Matsapha** is the largest and most active zone of this type in the kingdom, strategically positioned just 10 km from Manzini and 32 km from Mbabane. The vast majority of manufacturers – excluding the sugar and timber industries – are based here. A popular choice with both international and local investors, Matsapha has enjoyed substantial upgrading and expansion of its primary infrastructure, with water and electricity supply, telephone and emergency services substantially improved during recent years. The Matsapha Town Board is a fully-fledged administrative entity in its own right. A container depot is linked by rail to an appealing choice of factory space and business premises for lease, while financial institutions supplement an ever-widening network of support services. Additional land is available for development, plus the ongoing construction of factory shells is geared to attract new manufacturing industries.

#### BASTION OF CULTURE

**Lobamba** is the nation's spiritual and cultural centre – the site of its impressive, imposing Houses of Parliament where visitors are welcome to attend debates, and the Royal Lozitha Palace: the latter's newly constructed Grand Hall was in August 2016 used to host the two main events of the 36th Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government. The nearby National Archives and Museum is filled with informative, eye-catching displays: the most recent addition is '500 Years of Digitised Oral Swati Clan Histories'. Somholo National Stadium, meanwhile, hosts international soccer matches, music concerts, the annual Independence Day Celebrations and an extensive roster of cultural events.

Ezulwini translates from SiSwati as the Valley of Heaven and is hallmarked by its congregation of international-class hotels, resorts, lodges and casinos. An international convention centre and adjacent luxury hotel are currently under construction. Large shopping centres afford convenient access to numerous retail outlets, taverns and restaurants, along with banking and real estate facilities. Authentic handicrafts for sale are displayed at a large open-air market with ample parking. Flanked by pristine nature reserves, the valley has

spawned a bespoke residential area and attained township status. More shopping malls, office parks and mixed-use developments are either being built or in their planning stages.

#### COUNTRY CHARM

In true African tradition – and imbuing them with an equally trademarked sense of timelessness – the kingdom's informal, friendly outlying towns grew originally around trading stores. Their evolution has been determined by population numbers, diversity of local economic activities, linkages to the hinterland and the levels of available services and facilities. Physical infrastructure improvements have led not only to improved inter-centre communications, but also to magnificent scenic-drives for visitors who are always welcomed by their hosts.

**Nhlangano** is the agricultural centre for southern Eswatini and administrative headquarters of the Shiselweni District. Its name translates as 'meeting place' and commemorates the historic encounter between King Sobhuza II and King George VI of Great Britain. Attractions include a tourist-favourite casino with conference facilities and modern shopping centre. An ample labour force is available for the small industrial estate and established roads link the centre with Mbabane, Manzini and Mahamba, which is near the railhead at Piet Retief in South Africa. Scenery is spectacular with an abundance of flora and fauna, particularly around Mahamba and Msongweni Gorge.

**Ngwenya** lies west of Mbabane and is the busiest border post. To promote decentralisation and encourage industry to locate here, a large-scale factory park was constructed as part of government's visionary Millennium Programme. A nearby glass-making factory is the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere, specialising in the hand-blowing of recycled glass. **Sidwashini** near Mbabane contains light manufacturing and service industries, with a large industrial site close to the city centre. The Malaysia-headquartered Limkokwing University of Creative Technology opened its local campus here in 2011.

**Malkerns** is a small town set in the heart of fertile, well-established farming country hallmarked by sugarcane fields and vast plantations of pineapple.

The latter are owned by the Rhodes Food Group and processed at its subsidiary plant. In the valley lies the eclectic House on Fire, which is an indoors/outdoors venue where the world-renowned MTN Bushfire festival of music and the arts is held each year. Towards the district's southwest, **Mankayane** is the focal point of Eswatini's mohair industry.

In the sugarcane-producing southern lowveld, **Big Bend** is situated on the tarred road to Lavumisa border post and named after a giant sweep in the Great Usutu River en route to the Indian Ocean.

**Simunye**, the third largest population centre, is a vibrant sugar producing area and growth point. It features an attractive commercial complex with shops set around interlinking garden malls, as well as social, educational and training centres. Both here and at Mhlume, processed sugar is marketed worldwide, while **Tshaneni** is also a major agricultural centre.

The small and picturesque escarpment town of Siteki serves as administrative headquarters for the easternmost Lubombo district. Historic **Pigg's Peak** in the far north was once a famous gold-mining centre, and is currently in the process of returning to its former glory thanks to the introduction of new mining technology. This 'alpine' area of north-west Eswatini is also sought after for its breathtaking views, and a luxury hotel-casino complex attracts numbers of foreign visitors.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

- King Mswati III International Airport in the northeast is 45 km from Manzini and 80 km from Mbabane
- Any of numerous border posts, open daily; tarred roads link to main centres of South Africa and Mozambique
- Maputo in Mozambique is the nearest harbour

Car rental/minibus/taxi; shuttle buses operate between the airport and Mbabane, Manzini and Ezulwini.





# BANKING, FINANCE & INSURANCE

*When the Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, delivered his Budget Speech for 2022/23, he reassured Parliament and the nation that the financial sector remained resilient to the economic disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This was despite the pandemic continuing to present a challenging operating environment for the banking sector, he said - wherein credit and operational risks to financial stability remain elevated – and was largely made possible by monetary and macroprudential policy measures. Minister Rijkenberg detailed how the pandemic's adverse effects on domestic economic activity had affected the financial condition of households and businesses, with a knock-on effect on credit, liquidity and operational risks in the banking system.*

Continuing, he explained that the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) had decisively intervened with monetary and macroprudential policy measures aimed at safeguarding financial system stability, as well as supporting economic recovery. Measures were implemented to alleviate the impact of the pandemic on Supervised Financial Institutions, such as giving permission to these institutions to grant credit relief to borrowers affected by the pandemic, reducing the minimum liquidity requirements by five percent for all banks that may come under liquidity distress, enabling the deferral of the payment of dividends, and promoting the utilisation of digital and cashless payment platforms. Consequently, the measures supported the banking sector in building up and maintaining ample capital and liquidity buffers, over and above the statutory minimum requirements, to cushion them against emerging risks during the pandemic period. The Minister asserted that “this provides for confidence and certainty in our economy, as the CBE stands ready to take action in order to address any emerging risks to financial sector stability.

Rijkenberg then disclosed that, as part of government's mandate of ensuring a sound financial regulatory framework for the country, several banking and non-banking laws will be reviewed in order to create an environment which promotes private sector development. Furthermore, recent initiatives within the financial sector included completion of the automation of the Eswatini Stock Exchange, which will facilitate the participation of ordinary Emaswati to buy and sell companies' shares and debt instruments using their cellphones. The Minister opined that the latter would facilitate electronic trading, which in turn should encourage more listings as well as active trading exchange. Furthermore, as the Eswatini Stock Exchange also incorporates a SME platform that

enables small and medium enterprises to participate in the stock exchange, government expects that Swati-owned businesses will benefit from accessing available financial resources in order to expand their undertakings.

Financial Inclusion statistics, as announced by Minister Rijkenberg:

- 85 percent of Emaswati have access to formal financial services, with inclusion at
  - 90 percent among adults residing in urban areas, compared to
  - 83 percent in rural areas
  - 87 percent among women, compared to
  - 83 percent among men

The Minister stated that government will develop and finalise a Financial Inclusion Policy as well as legislation to improve access to development finance. The National Financial Education Strategy will also be concluded, this to provide a framework and roadmap wherewith to educate the populace financially.

## FINANCIAL STABILITY

Continuing, Rijkenberg spoke of how the CBE assesses the financial sector in order to ensure that it is stable, and how it noted that “pockets of vulnerabilities” nevertheless exist. These risks largely emanate from the low interest-rate environment prevailing both domestically and internationally, he said, as it presents a double-edged sword: on one hand, low interest rates have the potential to boost economic productivity by encouraging loans and the use of credit facilities, but on the other hand could incentivise risk-taking among investors in search of higher yields. The Minister said that the CBE continued to monitor the banking sector in light of a volatile global environment and instituted mitigation actions, as a result of which the banking

system's resilience improved. He reported that said improvement was largely due to enhanced capital quality and increased coverage of risk for capital market activities introduced by the migration to Basel II and IFRS9 rules.

Rijkenberg disclosed that Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies' total combined assets grew to E1.7-billion from E0.85-billion when the financial regulation came into effect, reflecting an 85 percent increase in the assets of the sector. He said that overall, risks from the non-bank financial sector remained elevated despite notable growth in the sector's assets, and that the risks originated from the volatility of financial markets. Concentration-risks also remained high in the Pension and Retirement Funds subsector, and as a result of which, government together with the CBE drafted a Financial Stability Bill that aims to be an overarching guide to macroprudential surveillance.

The Minister explained that while the ultimate goals of macroprudential surveillance are risk mitigation, planning for potential crises and how to manage risk, the Bill is also a significant pillar of guarding financial stability: in this regard, the CBE's work of formulating a crisis-binder is ongoing, and the institution is furthermore exploring options of establishing a Deposit Protection Scheme. The latter is reportedly an integral part of the Crisis Preparedness, Management and Resolution Framework that is currently under development. The framework will bring Eswatini in line with international best practices on macroprudential surveillance in light of dynamic global risk parameters, from which the kingdom is not exempt.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR REGULATION

The Finance Minister informed Parliament and the nation that implementation of the Basel II regulatory enhancement project was under way, the aim of which is to ensure that consumers are protected while Banks remain resilient to shocks. He said it was anticipated that all of the Pillars' by-laws would soon be finalised: furthermore, the CBE was continuing to review secondary legislation for laws under its purview, this in trying to be responsive to changes that prevail in the banking landscape.

## FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Minister Rijkenberg detailed three initiatives which have become synonymous with the worldwide fight against cybercrime:

- \* The Eswatini Financial Intelligence Unit has continued to play an important role in the Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT) efforts, both from a policy and technical perspective through its distribution of information to law-enforcement agencies
- \* To ensure the integrity of the financial system, the CBE has reviewed and deployed its AML and CFT risk-based supervisory framework: the aim is to ensure that the financial system is not used to launder illicit funds or finance terrorism and, if it so happens, such practice is quickly monitored and perpetrators are detected and deterred from such conduct
- In addition, government passed legislation which provides a mechanism for civil forfeiture of the proceeds of crime: this is a process that runs parallel to the criminal prosecution and seeks to separate offenders from their ill-gotten gains

## FX

Rijkenberg concluded his remarks with observations regarding Eswatini's forex scenario:

- To ensure prudent administration of exchange controls, the CBE phased in a risk-based approach which resulted in the adoption of a financial surveillance function
- Stakeholder engagements with authorised dealers increased, this in order to ensure ease of implementing the surveillance function: the CBE will be revising the simple guide to exchange controls to further enhance the public's understanding of the foreign exchange system.



**First National Bank (FNB)** of Eswatini began operating in Eswatini in 1995,

and since then has grown to be a market leader in terms of portfolio size, profits, and penetration across

the Retail, Commercial and Corporate sectors. The FNBE footprint is widely spread with a network of 11 branches, 2 agencies, 80 ATMs, 26 ADTs, and 320 CashPlush Agents nationwide. The Bank currently employs more than 400 staff.

The Bank's products and services cover the requirements of all customers, from large corporate entities to small and medium commercial businesses, and individual customers. A strong, customer-focused culture ensures that products are tailored to clients' needs and are accessible to all. The offering ranges from transactional to save and invest products, as well as a comprehensive lend portfolio covering not only personal needs but also focusing on property loans and asset finance. FNBE's insurance portfolio is also seeing significant growth.

Mobile and digital banking solutions aimed at making transactions convenient and cost-effective for clients have yielded positive results. The bank's technology solutions in the form of Online Banking and mobile apps like the FNB Banking App and Cellphone Banking are so deeply entrenched, that they are now the primary channels that FNB customers are conducting their transactions, with fewer and fewer customers using the branch to access banking.

A true commitment to being the Bank that can help "start, run and grow your business", FNB's Online Banking and FNB App for Business help business owners save time by having access to their daily account balances, transaction history, statements, and create/add or remove beneficiaries as required and be able to make payments and transfers 24/7. eWallet Bulk send is another popular product with businesses, as it enables business owners to send an eWallet to multiple recipients simultaneously. This banking solution ensures financial inclusion and accessibility to banking features for the FNB-banked, the non-FNB-banked, and the un-banked Swazi national.

Cash Plus is a convenient way for both FNB and non-FNB customers to deposit and withdraw cash as well as be able to purchase prepaid electricity and airtime from retailers who are registered FNB CashPlus Agents. As of April 2022, 394 CashPlus Agents have been made available to customers countrywide and this number continues to grow rapidly. This solution

is aimed at bringing banking closer to the homes of FNB customers.

FNB goes outside the boundaries of banking to help customers transact globally with ease. The Treasury and Forex departments cater to all local and foreign market transactions, offering expert international banking advice and information. Retail customers can now make cross-border payments, global payments, and transfers to anywhere in the world with Forex on the FNB App. With just a few taps on the FNB App customers can now make foreign exchange payments safely and securely using their mobile devices, which not only makes this innovative solution more convenient, but it also makes for a better customer experience

WesBank, with dealership representation in Manzini and Mbabane, is FNB's leasing arm specializing in competitive leasing services for vehicles, motorbikes, machinery, and equipment. It is a key provider of asset-based finance catering for both corporate and individual clients and provides customer service facilities at several motor dealer outlets countrywide.

The FNB Eswatini Foundation was launched in 2014 with the aim of creating an FNBE footprint through corporate social investment actions in local communities where the Bank operates. Through the Foundation's core pillars focused on the development of health, entrepreneurship, social welfare, and education initiatives in the country, FNB continues to showcase its commitment to a transformative agenda that ultimately seeks to improve the lives of the people of Eswatini.

For more information contact us through the following channels:

- Contact Support Centre: 2518 6000 or 800 6100 (Toll-Free)
- WhatsApp: 7802 9591
- Email: [gethelp@fnb.co.sz](mailto:gethelp@fnb.co.sz)

# Change the way you make international payments with Forex on App



FNB's Forex on App introduces a better way to make global payments and transfers to anywhere in the world. With just a few taps on the FNB App, customers can now make foreign exchange payments safely and securely using their mobile devices, which makes this innovative solution more convenient and ensures a better customer experience.

## An innovative solution at no additional cost to customers

The Foreign Exchange solution is not new to FNB customers who have experienced the benefits of Forex Online for years. With Forex Online, customers have been able to not only transact in a foreign currency but also save in a wide range of foreign currencies and transfer funds between foreign currency accounts. All these capabilities are now accessible with Forex on App at no additional cost to FNB customers.

## From Forex Online to Forex on App

Forex on App is FNB's way of ensuring easier, better, and more seamless transactions when customers are making payments beyond our borders. Not so long ago, the Bank embarked on a drive to migrate its customers from manual Forex

transactions to Forex Online. This was a welcomed move as most of the Bank's Retail and Commercial customers embraced the change since it was more convenient.

## Get easier access to daily global foreign exchange rates

Through the easy-to-use App, you can access the current and updated exchange rates of 17 foreign currencies right in your hands using your mobile phone. Customers no longer have to visit a bank branch to inquire about the valid buying and selling of rates but can see these right on their smartphones.

## Enjoy a seamless travel experience with Forex on App

From paying for your flights to booking your accommodation, this all-in-one platform allows you to cut out the 'middlemen' and save money in nearly every aspect of travel. Forex on App offers a powerful financial solution that is simple and easy to use which can help customers to pay for traveling expenses in foreign currency, at no extra cost to them. This solution is a must-have for any traveler.

## Who can use Forex on App?

- Individuals who import goods and need to pay for them.
  - You can make an advanced payment in this regard or,
  - You can pay for the goods once they have arrived in Eswatini
- Pay for travel (flights, accommodation, and other expenses)
- Fund your offshore account for your holiday spending
- Pay for your tuition
- Pay for your child's subsistence allowances when studying abroad
- Pay for other international payment obligations
- Send a financial gift abroad to a loved one
- Convert funds received from abroad (individuals who are paid in foreign currency can convert from their foreign currency account to their SZL account)



## What can you do with Forex on App?

### Make global payments

Whether you are sending a gift, paying for services rendered or imports, funding offshore investments, paying tuition, or securing your holiday accommodation. Do it all on the FNB App in the comfort of your home or office.

### Check Forex rates

Access the Exchange Rate of 17 foreign currencies right in the palm of your hand. Whether you want to sell or buy any of the foreign currencies, you will find suitable rates all on the FNB App.

### Make Global Transfers

Easily convert funds from any of your foreign currency accounts (US Dollar, British Pound, or Euro) into your local currency account using Global Transfers on the App.



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Vision statement that **'Eswatini is Our Home, We Drive Her Growth'**. The institution recognises that efforts to drive the nation's growth cannot be in isolation of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector, because SMEs are the backbone of the Swazi economy and remain vital in the creation of new jobs.

Standard Bank is strongly supportive of the SMEs and aspires to remain relevant in this market: during the past five years the Bank has invested over E300-million in developing its digital capabilities for this sector, whilst also enhancing the financial and investment solutions that it has been offering all along. The Bank's hunger is to continually find ways to enable SMEs to succeed and grow by partnering to simplify routine banking, as well as in providing relevant financing models for local SMEs. Its Enterprise Banking Value Proposition – delivering affordable, accessible and reliable financial and digital solutions to the SME sector – is based on the following pillars:

1. Relationship Management: Standard Bank offers personalised banking to SMEs through Relationship Managers, which is a proactive approach to serve and help business owners grow their enterprises from small to large.
2. Accessibility: Understanding that time spent away from one's business can equal money lost, the Bank's self-service digital channels enable transacting at any time of day or night.
3. Simplicity: The entire Enterprise Banking product range is uncomplicated and tailored to the needs of this sector.
4. Access to Financial and Business Expertise: This pillar personifies Standard Bank's pay off line, **'Moving Forward'**. The institution offers a profound reservoir of financial and business expertise through its Business Bankers and through leveraging its relationships with banks within the Standard Bank Group, as well as across business partnerships.

Standard Bank's value proposition has two main elements, a Digital Services Offering and a Product Offering:

1. Enterprise Direct is a business centre dedicated to making banking easy, simple and accessible for all SME clients. Simply by calling (+268) 2517 5310 or dialling a shortcode at an eBanking cubicle in any Standard Bank branch, a client is able to get immediate assistance.
2. Enterprise Online is an internet-based banking platform that allows clients to make payments, transfers, open accounts and buy value added services in real-time, anytime, anywhere.
3. Cash Deposit Machines
  - Allow clients to make bulk deposits
  - No ATM Card needed
  - Banking Hours do not apply
  - Make deposits to any account
  - Real-time reflection of deposits

**ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT & SAVINGS BANK (EDSB)** – known as 'Eswatini Bank' – is wholly owned by government and is also the only 100-percent locally-owned bank in the country. As defined by its name, EDSB is both a development and a commercial entity: its development function includes financing projects or businesses in sectors such as industry, commerce, agriculture, transport, mining, SMMEs, healthcare, tourism, youth entrepreneurship, property development, etc.

#### ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION (FINCORP)



FinCorp has provided access to financial assistance to thousands of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and individuals across all economic sectors, thereby making a meaningful contribution to improving the standard of living and general economic growth. Entrepreneurs operating both on Eswatini Nation Land and Title Deed Land continue to receive financial assistance to start new businesses and/or expand existing ones. A significant proportion of FINCORP's loan book represents agribusiness activities, mostly situated in rural areas. Statistics have shown that the agricultural sector offers enormous job opportunities to the general population throughout the country is also key to economic

recovery. Other major sectors include trucking and haulage, forestry, property investment, and general business, covering trade, retail, manufacturing, construction, and services.

#### Highlights for the past 27 years

- FINCORP has disbursed a cumulative E6.3 billion in loans.
- Has assisted over 80 000 SMEs and individuals from inception to date.
- Created over 15 000 jobs.
- Companies financed by FINCORP contribute about E1.5 billion to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- FINCORP has made good strides in strengthening its footprint by setting up a remote branch network in order to be more accessible.
- The company has also established a Business Development Support (BDS) unit to provide advisory services to clients through mentoring and coaching and to provide needs-based business training to clients.
- Delivered meaningful development impact in various rural communities.

FINCORP later diversified its product offering by setting up two subsidiary companies, namely;

- FIRST FINANCE COMPANY which offers General Purpose Finance.
- FINSURE ASSURANCE LIMITED which offers Insurance Products.

FIRST FINANCE has grown to become one of the leading micro-lenders in the country, while FINSURE has presented an opportunity to broaden product offerings in the financial services sector and offer additional convenience to clients in so far as long-term insurance is concerned.

FINCORP's state-of-the-art Head Office at the corner of Gwamile and Dabede Streets in Mbabane also houses the FINCORP Mbabane Branch; the FIRST FINANCE Head Office and Branch. The building also houses FINSURE ASSURANCE LIMITED.

FINCORP's outlook is quite optimistic. The new five-year strategy for 2022 - 2027 is anchored on "Digital

Transformation and Improved Customer Experience." This strategy aims to deliver the company's most ambitious goal of fully embracing digital platforms, innovation, and agility in order to continue 'Helping You To Help Yourself.'

#### FINCORP SUBSIDIARIES

1. FIRST FINANCE COMPANY (Pty) Ltd is a financial services provider currently operating in Eswatini. It provides a wide range of general-purpose financial services across the kingdom. Since 2010, FIRST FINANCE has invested in expanding its footprint and professional teams throughout the country to meet the dynamic needs of its clients. Key clients include salaried employees of government, parastatals and selected private companies.

The company has consistently experienced phenomenal demand for loans since its inception. Despite challenges attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the 2021 financial year, FIRST FINANCE has disbursed over E1 billion into the pockets of emaSwati! This astronomical amount represents loans held by employees from both the private and public sectors. FIRST FINANCE offers;

- a) Short Term Loans: These are loans that can be paid within the shortest period between 1-24 months.
  - b) Medium Term Loans: These are loans that can be repaid within the median period. An individual can also revolve the loan when a need arises. The repayment period ranges from 25-48 months.
  - c) Long Term Loans: A long-term loan is generally considered to be a loan with a repayment term longer than five years. These loans are repaid wFIRST FINANCE loans are mostly repaid through source deduction for clients whereby the employer has formalized a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the company. Meanwhile, source deductions for civil servants are administered through the Central Deduction Administration System (CDAS).
2. FINSURE ASSURANCE COMPANY is an insurance company wholly owned by FINCORP. It offers Long-Term Insurances services with a

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Cnr of Gwamile & Dabede Streets

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**Siphofaneni Branch**  
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#### Head Office

First Floor, Intfutuko Building  
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P.O.BOX 4795, Mbabane, H100, Eswatini  
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#### Manzini Branch

Louw Street, SEC Building Ground Floor  
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#### Nhlangano Branch

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#### Nedbank PocketPOS™ versus cash or internet payments

- Convenience and greater security for your customers.
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#### Nedbank PocketPOS™ versus cash or internet payments

- Fully mobile – device can be charged through a USB port in a car or on a laptop.
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- Security on par with traditional POS solutions.

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Visit [nedbank.co.sz](http://nedbank.co.sz) and complete the order form for your Nedbank PocketPOS™. A Contact Centre consultant will contact you within 24 hours to take you through the application process and answer any questions you may have. We will deliver the device directly to you within five working days (subject to availability and all conditions being met). Alternatively, please call 2408 1251.

significant proportion being credit life insurance. FINSURE ASSURANCE works with both corporate and individual clients. Having been in the industry for a long, the company prides itself on living up to its customer's expectations and delivering on its promise of service. FINSURE ASSURANCE products include;

- a) Life Insurance: Group life insurance and pensions, life ordinary or individual life, and funeral schemes.
- b) Credit Life Insurance: insurance of the debts held by clients in the event of death.

In conclusion, the corporation remains fully committed to its founding mandate of (I) Providing access to credit; (II) Job creation, and finally (III) Poverty alleviation in order to make a meaningful contribution to the socio-economic development of the nation.

**NEDBANK ESWATINI** is an international bank that is a subsidiary of the Nedbank Group of South Africa: as such, it creates value through constant innovation and reinvestment. With brand repositioned, Nedbank seeks to be more client-centric,



driven by a fresh, engaging tagline: 'See Money Differently'. Nedbank saw an opportunity to revitalise the brand to reflect some of the business changes that have been taking place. Based on the insight that money well managed can make a positive difference to individuals, businesses and communities, Nedbank chose to challenge and inspire the public to 'See Money Differently'. This inspiration is consistent with Nedbank's purpose of using its financial expertise to do good.

Headquartered in the NedCentre Building, Swazi Plaza, Mbabane, Nedbank has 11 branches, an agency and a Bureau de Change, as well as 52 ATMs nationwide. Through Wholesale, Business, Retail and SME banking, the Bank offers a wide range of products coupled with exceptional services such as lending, global business products, investments, loans, e-banking, asset-based finance, bancassurance, digital banking services, treasury and transactional banking. With the upgraded core banking system, the Bank introduced in its offerings real-time banking

as well as Mobile Banking with the Nedbank Money (Africa) app that allows clients to transact at the palm of their hands, anytime, anywhere. Nedbank Online Banking allows customers to enjoy access at their convenience and, most importantly, on a secure platform at the comfort of their homes or offices.

Nedbank uses its financial expertise to do good for individuals, families, businesses and society through innovative products and a superior banking service that is accessible and convenient. The Bank does more than just make day-to-day banking easy through its cheque, savings, investment, Mobi-Money and credit accounts, it views banking differently by providing vehicle finance and home loans, Credit cards, foreign exchange for travellers, and life assurance and insurance to cover individuals, their loved ones and assets. In terms of growth in the value of savings with Nedbank Eswatini and in asset-based finance and home loans, the institution continues to enhance its administrative efficiency. Furthermore, high-net-worth individuals are increasingly turning to Nedbank Private Banking for superior service in protecting and growing assets.

Nedbank's Current Account is a convenient, safe and cashless mechanism for the payment of goods and services: client-benefits include ATM card, cheque book, interest earned, debit orders, electronic funds transfer and overdraft facilities which can also be accessed by third-party payment. Customers stand to qualify for a Personal Loan facility and an Overdraft which is a quick and convenient way of accessing funds when in need. Loan products also include Home Loans (Urban and Rural), Lusiba Education Assistance Programme (LEAP) loan, and Vehicle and Asset Finance: these ensure access to funds at critical times.

For entry-level-income customers and pensioners, Nedbank offers the Savings Plus account which is a standard account that features card-based transactions and the options of SMS notification, online and Mobile banking. The Just Save accounts offer attractive methods of saving funds without incurring fees or commission, and bring the advantages of free banking as well as highly competitive rates. Fixed and Notice deposits are alternatives that offer varied periods and are accessible. The Club Savings Account that targets groups and clubs with a minimum of three people,

does not attract maintenance, service and deposit charges. Customers in this group savings account get two free withdrawals per month.

- **SME and Institutional Banking:** Economic research has shown that developing countries can increase economic activity by empowering their SMEs. Nedbank Eswatini's SME Banking came about following the Bank's decision to tailor-make products and services specifically to assist and address SME business and banking needs.

- **Private Banking:** Nedbank caters specifically for the personal financial needs of high-net worth individuals. It offers a specialised level of service and a personal contact point for all customer financial requirements, be they general banking, portfolio management, estate planning or insurance and lending needs.

- **Wholesale and Business Banking:** More than just a product provider – we are a strategic financial partner with a focused objective to help our clients achieve their business vision and expand their opportunities. This is achieved through the provision of tailored solutions, characterised by innovation and a highly integrated partnership approach.

- **Asset-based Finance:** Nedbank ensures that clients enjoy the process of purchasing a vehicle, for personal and/or business use and gets them behind the wheel in no time.

- **Global Business:** This department facilitates clients' finance and/or transaction settlements, minimising credit and operational risks and maximising our client's ability to trade.

- **Treasury:** This department facilitates foreign currency trading and wholesale deposit-placements and offers specialised solutions in foreign exchange and interest rate risk management.

### ESWATINI BUILDING SOCIETY (SBS)

Eswatini Building Society declares that in the face of slow economic progress, it has maintained steady growth for the past 59 years, thereby 'Creating Wealth for You': it is the major provider of long-term mortgage lending and loan finance for the purchase of vacant land, completed property and

constructing affordable housing. The Society has vast knowledge of the local mortgage bond market and meets client demand, including below-prime mortgage loans for residential property, repayment holidays and bond re-advances and rescheduling. SBS also offers commercial mortgage loans to the business community to obtain and develop commercial property: this is linked to the Bond Re-Advance facility that enables businesses to secure loans within 24 hours to finance working-capital requirements against bonded property.

### SAFEGUARDS & SAVINGS

Eswatini Royal Insurance Corporation (ESRIC) – est. 1973 - is a solid and reputable insurer, contributing to a stable domestic insurance environment that benefits the Eswatini economy. Its main business activity is the provision of short-term insurance, life assurance to individuals, and pension administration.

Lidwala Insurance Company is a locally owned, short-term insurance company which opened its doors in 2009 after acquiring an operating licence from the Registrar of Insurance and Pension Funds.

Liberty Life Eswatini is a specialist life insurance company that provides group and individual/personal risk insurance solutions for life-changing events.

STANLIB Eswatini is a subsidiary of the Liberty Life. STANLIB Eswatini prides itself on being the largest asset manager based in the kingdom.

Old Mutual Eswatini is committed to playing a meaningful role in the country's economic development and helping clients build wealth and attain financial independence by investing and growing their savings.

The Eswatini National Provident Fund is a savings scheme that provides benefits to employed persons when they retire or become incapacitated.

The Public Service Pensions Fund (PSPF) was established to manage and administer pensions for government employees. It is also charged with managing and investing the accumulated pension assets of the scheme. The PSPF provides Retirement Annuities, Death Benefits, Disability Benefits and other pension-related benefits.



# FOREIGN TRADE & INVESTMENT

*Cabinet has issued a clear message of the Administration's resolve to maintain its momentum towards realising the country's economic turnaround. Local and international news media were informed that - led by His Majesty King Mswati III and Her Majesty the Queen Mother - Eswatini had strengthened and expanded its bilateral relations with stakeholders and major trade partners such as South Africa, India and ROC-Taiwan, and additionally signed a cooperation agreement with Singapore. Furthermore, government renewed its commitment to removing all barriers to the attraction of investment, as well as ensuring policy certainty and simplifying the business environment, tasks that will fall to a Delivery Unit and which are aimed at increasing the chances of all government and investment projects succeeding, and thereby enabling private sector growth.*

Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg subsequently issued a reassurance that government continues endeavouring to create more jobs and attract new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), this with the intention to catalyse industrialisation for sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation. He said that meaningful growth will be achieved by enabling the private sector to lead and do what it does best, namely growing the kingdom's economy and thereby generating meaningful, lasting employment opportunities. Further on the topic of Eswatini's investment climate, Rijkenberg described the Strategic Roadmap to 2022 as government's commitment "to catapult the country into a growth path that will channel every citizen into productive economic activities".

Reliable and affordable electricity and internet remain key priorities for government in order to stimulate private sector growth and productivity, the Minister declared, to which end government intends to expedite national plans for promoting the local production of electricity and to ensure that end-users are the primary beneficiaries of Eswatini's burgeoning cyber-scape. He said that government will continue to promulgate pro-business policies in an effort to bolster the operating environment, which in turn will enhance the potential of the private sector to contribute towards economic growth and employment creation. In conclusion, Minister Rijkenberg summed up by stating that a vibrant private sector will lead to improved food security, access to affordable internet and communication services, a thriving renewable-energy industry, increased tourism and full utilisation of the kingdom's preferential trade agreements.

## FDI ARRIVALS

One such quota- and tariff-free agreement is the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) comprising 21 countries and 560-million potential consumers, and which was reportedly one of the factors behind food-processing megacompany, Kellogg-Tolaram (Pty) Ltd (K-T), deciding to establish a manufacturing-base in Eswatini. To date, a specially designed, 18 000 m<sup>2</sup> factory-shell reportedly worth E220-million has been erected at Matsapha industrial town outside Manzini, and machinery valued at E200-million shipped in

from the USA. When unpacking the project to media representatives, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, said that the above would constitute phase one, the manufacturing of noodle-based foodstuffs: phases two and three, when introduced, will see the expansion of operations to include a cereals-processing plant and thus witness additional investment.

Economic Benefits include:

- K-T Eswatini will post export-revenues running into billions of Emalangeni
- Local company, Roots Construction, was awarded the tender to build the massive site
- In accordance with a buyback clause in the fully enforceable Memorandum of Agreement, K-T Eswatini shall within three to five years purchase the factory shell: government says that it intends to reinvest that money in additional factory shells and get more people employed
- K-T Eswatini almost immediately began recruiting, this in a drive to train key staff ahead of the opening date
- K-T Eswatini sees the kingdom as a hub and a launchpad into Africa, including exploration of COMESA's potential
- K-T Eswatini is already serving as an advocate for the kingdom: talks with a significant American company that wishes to supply the US from Southern Africa were said to be at an advanced stage
- K-T Eswatini will generate employment opportunities throughout all of its phases, from an initial 260 direct jobs to over 600 come Phase II
- Spinoffs to SMEs, i.e. support services such as transport, maintenance, catering, security, cleaning, consultancy, etc, will result in a significant number of indirect jobs
- Local suppliers: K-T Eswatini will source some of its input materials locally, and develop local suppliers where possible
- Agriculture: in Phase II, K-T Eswatini will be adding cereals to the production lines, which should incentivise local farmers to increase their output, of maize in particular

Minister Khumalo concluded the Q & A with affirmations:

- Kellogg's, and by extension K-T, is both a sound investment and the calibre of investor worth fighting for...Eswatini needs high quality, long-term employment and credible investors
- The risk factor is minimal...the appropriate type of investment for the creation of sustainable jobs
- Government urges the nation to support the project and celebrate the breakthrough, as more is coming
- Perception-wise, landing K-T conveys a strong sentiment abroad – Eswatini is open for business!

What the investors said:

- Kellogg Company's new, long-term partnership with leading food company, Tolaram Africa, will significantly increase Kellogg's presence

in the growing African market and advance the company's breakfast, snacks and emerging market strategies to drive future growth

- As a region that is experiencing explosive growth, with a population of almost one billion people and an economy that is expected to more than double over the next 10 years, Sub-Saharan Africa provides tremendous opportunity for Kellogg Company
- Tolaram Africa has built a highly successful consumer-products business and today is one of the largest food companies in Nigeria...it has a great track record of building beloved consumer brands and fuelling their growth, so this partnership is an excellent strategic fit for Kellogg
- Kellogg is a world leader in its categories and has successfully built brands that are synonymous with it: Tolaram Group is thus pleased to have entered into this partnership as we share similar values and an aligned vision for Africa, a continent in which we have been operating for over 35 years

#### FILLING THE POWER-POOL

Eswatini has officially welcomed another new foreign direct investor, the Australia-based independent power producer (IPP) and renewable energy storage operator, Frazium Energy (Pty) Ltd, whose Robert Frazer was introduced to dignitaries, stakeholders and the media at an event hosted by the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA). To paraphrase Frazium Energy's official profile:

- Large-scale Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System IPP focused on developing, owning and operating renewable energy projects globally: investment appetite includes developing countries
- Primary interest lies in projects that are able to combine Solar PV and battery energy storage
- Primary target is to focus on utility-scale Solar PV projects that are able to be combined with large-scale battery energy storage systems, so is constantly on the lookout for combined solar with storage opportunities worldwide

- Preference for flow batteries due to their longevity, positive environmental attributes and overall competitive levelized cost of energy, which is a measure of a power source that allows comparison of different methods of electricity generation on a consistent basis, and can also be regarded as the minimum constant price at which electricity must be sold in order to break even over the lifetime of a project
- Active throughout the entire process, from opportunity identification and validation, solution design, obtaining approvals and licences, building and operating
- Seeks to add value to renewables by the incorporation of storage, thereby enabling them to become a viable alternative to fossil fuel baseload or peaker generation
- Projects are designed to maximise the use of renewable energy for baseload reliability, energy utilisation, smoothing and peak shaving

It was said at the launch that Frazium Energy's presence in Eswatini – on 50 ha of Swati Nation Land at Edwaleni - will create over 100 new employment opportunities and, during phase one alone, inject an estimated E1.5-billion into the local economy. The primary site will reportedly comprise a 25 Megawatts (MW) Solar Farm, a 25-50MW/100MWh Vanadium Redox Flow Battery Farm, and a plant capable of manufacturing 10 million litres of electrolyte per annum. Robert Frazer disclosed that South Africa's ESKOM and the Southern African Power Pool are intended purchasers of the output: no mention was made of what part it will play in the kingdom's electricity scenario.

The Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, disclosed at the launch that landing Frazium Energy was the culmination of a year-long series of engagements involving his departments, EIPA and the German Chamber of Commerce. He described said engagements as "part of government's aggressive approach to luring investors who fall within the targeted sectors as outlined in the Strategic Roadmap to 2022...I'm excited that EIPA has been able to migrate an investment interest into a concrete project". Minister

Khumalo concluded by requesting the necessary support from all government entities and regulatory bodies to afford the project the means it requires to succeed. EIPA CEO, Sibani Mngomezulu, in a brief address celebrated the partnerships that gave birth to the project.

Robert Frazer highlighted that Eswatini's strategic geographical location will make it easy to access the large and growing Southern African electricity market, and the kingdom is therefore the ideal destination for his company's project. He singled out the close proximity of Mpumalanga's raw materials, as well as the harbours in Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal. Also of great importance, he said, is that the country's political environment remains stable, as evidenced by "the Australian government giving Eswatini the same safety rating as Germany". Frazer concluded his remarks by suggesting that when phase two of the investment is implemented, the project's total value to Eswatini could escalate to as much as E7-billion.

#### ANNUAL SHOWCASE

The Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) – which a few years ago celebrated its Golden Jubilee edition – routinely attracts a total of more than 200 vendors and exhibitors, the latter including companies from the USA, RoC-Taiwan, Indonesia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Botswana. As is customary, His Majesty King Mswati III officially opens the 10-day-long showcase, and he consistently stresses the need for Emaswati conducting business to look beyond the country's borders. With the most recent addition to Eswatini's already-substantial list of preferential markets being the long-negotiated Africa Continental Free Trade Area, the King pointed out that with a population of more than one billion consumers and a combined GDP exceeding US\$3-trillion, continental Africa should become Eswatini's primary trading terrain. He also urged EITF organizers to maintain the important practice of devising an annual theme which emphasises that 'Eswatini is Open for Business'.

Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, used EITF as the vehicle to launch the Export Readiness Manual: he said that with government adopting an export-led economic





# **“YOUR ONE STOP SHOP INVESTMENT & TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY”**

## **Eswatini offers investors the following:**

- Safe, secure, stable and profitable business environment
- Wide spectrum of trade and investment opportunities
- Extended access to large regional and international markets
- Good transport and communication infrastructure
- Proximity to strategic international sea and air ports

## **Invest in:**

- Agro-industry and food processing
- Manufacturing and assembly
- Life Sciences and healthcare
- Financial services
- Mining and minerals processing
- Tourism and recreation
- Property development
- Energy generation

## **Our Services Include:**

- Identification and dissemination of trade and investment opportunities
- Promotion and facilitation of internal and external trade Investment facilitation and aftercare services
- Facilitation of work permits and visas
- Business registration and licensing
- One stop shop information facility for investors



**Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority**

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Website: [www.investeswatini.org.sz/](http://www.investeswatini.org.sz/) | [www.facebook.com/Investandtrade](https://www.facebook.com/Investandtrade)

strategy, businesses of all sizes will through the document be capacitated with regard to export-related subjects such as the expectations and demands of global markets. Furthermore, as the kingdom's domestic market is relatively small, the manual is "a strategic imperative that will drive the growth of exports to other countries and allow local export-ready businesses to take advantage of the ever-increasing number of accessible-market configurations". Khumalo stressed that the manual was strategically tailored to answer the questions that local private sector companies would have with regard to requirements in the various markets to which Eswatini has access, would be relevant to small, medium and large businesses, and thus "a perfect complement to government initiatives to boost the growth of the economy by assisting our companies to better understand processes that relate to exports".

The manual resulted from a joint initiative between government, the European Union (EU) and COMESA: it covers strategic markets such as the USA's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the EU and UK, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and COMESA. Focal points include adhering to customs formalities, standards and the rules of origin, as well as a self-check list for businesses aspiring to engage in export trade. Minister Khumalo urged the private sector to make use of the manual in order to understand the finer points of exporting goods and services and thereby position themselves accordingly. He concluded by stating that the Export Readiness Manual highlights the key support institutions that the private sector could consult with regard to understanding export processes.

## MEET AND GREET

An innovative feature of EITF – and which supports its theme – is the Business Lounge on Hall #1 Deck: hosted by First National Bank (FNB) in conjunction with EIPA, the platform is described as providing the ideal space for networking, meetings and strengthening business connections, an 'office away from the office'. Its open-plan design features meeting-pods for up to four people around one table, full ITC availability and knowledgeable support staff.

Also partnering at the debut occasion was the Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO) which brought its long-accumulated knowledge to share with start-up business owners. The triumvirate thus saw EIPA responsible for investors who were seeking opportunities, SEDCO supporting local entrepreneurs in search of investors, and FNB unpacking the requirements for accessing finance. Once-off interactions included Eswatini Revenue Authority's session entitled 'Enhancing Tax Compliance for SMEs', and the National Agricultural Marketing Board's presentation on 'Accessing Markets for Agricultural Producers'. Post-event, EIPA said that the Business Lounge had brought many value-add benefits to the Trade Fair experience.

## PARTNERS IN TRADE

Britain has committed to continue supporting Eswatini beyond Brexit. Newly-appointed High Commissioner to Eswatini, John Lindfield, when presenting letters of credence to His Majesty King Mswati III at Lozitha Palace, said that Britain will be reopening its standalone embassy in the kingdom, which evinced a commitment to strengthening the existing bilateral relations with Eswatini. Lindfield emphasised that this includes working to ensure that Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) does not lead to any disruption to its trade with the bloc comprising Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Member States and Mozambique. He recalled how the Trade Ministers of Britain, SACU countries and Mozambican agreed to create a bilateral framework that replicates the effects of the existing EU-Southern African Development Community (SADC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), then reported that said group "had made good progress and looked forward to concluding the Agreement as soon as possible".

The High Commissioner said that British ministers understand that the EPA plays an important role in encouraging bilateral trade between the UK and Eswatini, as well as supporting regional integration within SACU. "The UK is committed to ensuring that these benefits continue as we leave the EU, and furthermore is working in partnership with Eswatini and others to provide this continuity in order to protect our businesses and consumers," he said. Continuing, Lindfield name-checked Eswatini as one

of the countries in which Britain wants to expand its support and assist in achieving even more. The relationship between Eswatini and Britain has remained strong in the years since 2005, he said, "but with a renewed focus on Africa, re-establishing a permanent British High Commission in Eswatini has been an important priority". Presenting his letters of credence at Lozitha Palace was the first step towards that, Lindfield told His Majesty, before expressing his hope that "in the not too distant future" they will be able to celebrate the opening of an actual High Commission building.

## AGOA AND BEYOND

In Eswatini, the USA's discretionary African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has long supported thousands of jobs in the textile and apparel industry, with the majority of employer-companies being of Asian origin and drawn to invest in the kingdom by the opportunity to benefit from quota- and duty-free exports to the US market. American businesses have meanwhile enjoyed less trade with Africa, to the point where US companies from the manufacturing and other sectors vociferously called on their government to make its trade-and-investment support services easier to access. Statistics showed that even though Africa was one of the fastest growing continents, trade between America and Africa had since 2014 declined by 32 percent, yet grown with other trade regions of the world.

With AGOA due for presidential renewal or cancellation in 2025, a new trade vehicle was unexpectedly launched. Named 'Prosper Africa', it purportedly sought to change the status quo and implied that AGOA would be superseded: the newcomer arrived amid growing attention being given to the African continent by the likes of mainland China, which had just pledged US\$60-billion in aid while already boasting an ever-growing footprint of largescale infrastructure projects. Six months after the official introduction of Prosper Africa, it was unpacked for Heads of Government and other stakeholders at the 12th US-Africa Business Summit, during the opening session of which the Deputy Secretary in the US Department of Commerce, Karen Dunn Kelley, began her address with a reminder that AGOA was never touted as a permanent fixture. She described Prosper Africa as a more country-specific

approach to doing business in Africa, one that would benefit companies, investors and workers in both Africa and the United States.

Eswatini's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, was after the presentations reported as saying it was clear that America has no intention of extending AGOA beyond 2025, and in order for the kingdom to formulate its strategic response to the new development, government's first task was to gain a full understanding of Prosper Africa, such as how to access funds and how they compare with other facilities in terms of the cost of the money.

The Minister said that, somewhat unlike AGOA, Prosper Africa seemed to be more bilateral with countries and companies, as opposed to trading blocs which, while it may affect the ideals and objectives of the new AfCFTA, opens doors to US companies that may wish to have a more investment type relationship through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) method. Khumalo said that Eswatini's PPP framework was yet to be fully tested, so the new dispensation will allow government to "step it up" and leverage on Prosper Africa. He concluded by declaring that seeing as Prosper Africa sets out to address the unique needs of a country, it was now up to Eswatini to design what could benefit it the most from the programme. (The kingdom meanwhile continues apace with initiatives aimed at deriving optimum value from AGOA, and which are detailed in previous editions of The Eswatini Review.)





# MANUFACTURING

*Cabinet continues to issue assurances to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector, saying that the development thereof remains of key importance to government. Paramount, according to a statement by Prime Minister Dlamini, would be creating business access to finance and markets, along with empowering the youth and women with entrepreneurial skills. This declaration was accompanied by an undertaking that government would "intently build strong relations with the private sector, providing the enabling environment to ensure its sustained growth to enhance job creation and innovation".*

Also disclosed was the imminent launch of a new model, known as State Business Relations (SBR), to ensure regular, open, structured, timely and detailed information exchange between the State and Business, the efficacy of which hinged on the business sector's willingness to commit. It was emphasised that there should be no difference between the private and public sectors, because "we are all working towards a similar goal of improving the lives of Eswatini, and government believes that the SBR will remove clutter and/or vacuum between us...we welcome constructive feedback from the business sector, and undertake to do the same".

Soon thereafter, Finance Minister Rijkenberg spoke of the empowerment of citizens and the provision of incentives for MSMEs, saying that the country needs to leverage on MSMEs' potential to build an economy that works for everyone, and "it is essential that we create new jobs, protect and grow existing businesses and attract foreign direct investment". He cited as notable milestones attained thus far the construction of the Manzini Trade Hub, the establishment of an Informal Traders Revolving Fund, the development of a leather and leather products subsector, and participation in international forums aimed at advancing the agenda of MSMEs' growth and promotion. The last-mentioned, Minister Rijkenberg pointed out, is dependent on support to access affordable finance, advisory services, infrastructural mechanisms and the availability of skilled labour.

He said that MSMEs face a relatively acute challenge in terms of attracting and retaining their workforce. Furthermore, inability to meet systematic and internationally accepted quality standards remains a major challenge for local MSMEs with regard to penetration or access to international markets for their products. Rijkenberg highlighted the fact that, as a remedial strategy, government has not only entered into various trade agreements, but has also taken "innumerable steps" to encourage the growth and promotion of the industrial sector. In addition and to help MSMEs gain access to international markets, a national Quality Assurance structure was set up to strengthen their capacity to provide international best practices and standards.

The Finance Minister pointed out that new trade

opportunities are being created for the business sector to take advantage of the most recent additions to Eswatini's already-substantial list of advantageous trade agreements, namely the Economic Cooperation Agreement (ECA) with the Republic of China-Taiwan, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). He said that manufacturing activity had recently rebounded in the wake of improved developments abroad, in particular the South African, American and European markets. The result was increased demand for the kingdom's major exports such as food-processing output and the manufacture of beverages and textiles products. Other positive contributors to growth were said to include the service sector, specifically in the ICT subsector which continues to benefit from increasing innovation.

## E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

Eswatini was during an African Union (AU) Extra-Ordinary Session officially unveiled as host nation of an AfCFTA support mechanism, namely the Southern Africa Regional Office of the African Electronic Trade Group eCommerce Platform. Government held an introductory Business Forum on the day preceding inauguration, and which featuring Business-to-Business Meetings, Plenary Sessions, Panel Discussions and a high-level Public Private Partnership (PPP) Dialogue. Topics that were discussed included:

- Towards an integrated, digitally connected and prosperous continent
- What are the priorities beyond the launch of the AfCFTA?
- MSME empowerment-training and capacity building in Africa
- Innovative financing and logistics services for business
- Digital infrastructure in Africa - how ready are we?
- PPPs for e-government and e-commerce development in Africa

Between-session presentations featured a cross-section of the continent's leading economists and venerated politicians, while the guest list included a number of former and current Heads of State,

The logo for Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) features the word "enidc" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark green rounded rectangular background.

*Eswatini National Industrial  
Development Corporation*

**VISION**  
Eswatini's  
Industrialisation  
frontrunner  
by 2022.

## SERVING INDUSTRIES THROUGH FINANCE

### BACKGROUND

The ENIDC is established in terms of the National Industrial Development Corporation Act of 1971 as a public enterprise.

### MISSION

The ENIDC mission is to invest in projects that are economically and financially viable, technically feasible, environmentally friendly and have sustainable medium to long term returns and growth effects to Eswatini's socio-economy and its stakeholders.

### WHAT WE DO

1. Project Finance through Equity Finance and Debt Finance
2. Managing Government Shares
3. Administration of Special Sector Development funds
4. Participation in PPP Projects

### MANDATE

In terms of the act, the ENIDC is mandated to:

- Establish and foster creation of sustainable employment opportunities.
- Facilitate, promote, guide and assist in financing of new business sectors.
- Provide schemes for expansion, better organization, modernization and efficient operations in existing business undertakings.
- Serve as custodian of government investments, including shares in various entities.
- Operate as a special purpose vehicle which invests on behalf of Government to maximize returns in various investing avenues, including Public Private Partnership (PPPs).



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Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation

representatives of the AU Commission, various SADC Ministers of Trade, top executives of the African Development Bank and the Afrexim Bank, representatives of several Regional Economic Communities, as well as leading lights from the private sector. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Business Council and the African Electronic Trade Group: the latter has a vision “to transform Africa's socio-economic environment by enabling African countries, communities, people and small and medium scale enterprises to leverage modern information and communication technologies”.

### THE LAUNCH

At the Mandvulo Grand Hall the following day, His Majesty King Mswati III began proceedings on what he called “this historic occasion” by declaring that the country, as a member of the AU, considered itself privileged to have been selected to host a regional office of such strategic importance in the implementation of the AfCFTA. He said that Eswatini's role will be to facilitate the marketing of goods from individuals and companies on a platform that provides easy access to what Southern Africa has to offer. The monarch described this as a paradigm shift from traditional online trading, as it brings a new e-commerce platform that will be marketing products for the entire region, and furthermore seeks to remove barriers to trade for small entrepreneurs, especially access to training, finance and markets. He said that consumers will have confidence in a marketplace that is regulated by policies of the AfCFTA.

The King urged all private sector stakeholders to use the facility as it will enable the marketing of products to regional, continental and global consumers: he pointed out that the country will, in essence, be responsible for “ensuring that no-one is left behind in accessing the benefits of being in a position to compete for the opportunities to be availed by the AfCFTA which, with the full participation of all AU Member States, presents a marketplace of over a billion potential consumers. His Majesty stressed that Eswatini is alive to the reality that in an increasingly globalising and paperless world, the digitalisation of commerce presents both opportunities and

challenges, as evinced by a recent UN observation that while the digital economy will be worth US\$23-trillion by 2025, the African continent is already trailing a considerable way behind.

### BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Expanding on the ‘digital-wealth gap’, the King spoke of digital platforms in certain countries accounting for 75 percent of all patents related to blockchain technologies, 50 percent of spending in the Internet of Things, over 75 percent of the cloud-computing market and about 90 percent of the market-capitalisation value of the top 70 digital platform companies. This “obvious and glaring digital divide,” the monarch opined, “therefore requires concerted global efforts to ensure that the gains in the digital economy are widely spread to include the majority of people, who are currently reaping little from it.” Continuing, His Majesty said that the new e-commerce platform will not confine citizens and private sector participants to being mere users and consumers, but enable the emergence of producers, exporters and innovators, thereby creating opportunities for enjoying a meaningful share in digital prosperity.

### VALUE-ADDING

Amid considerable fanfare, a gala event saw food-processing megacompany, Kellogg-Tolaram (Pty) Ltd (K-T), officially establish a manufacturing-base in Eswatini.

Minister Khumalo disclosed that government had courted K-T when the latter was on the verge of investing elsewhere: he described the negotiations as “a very difficult challenge, but our Strategic Roadmap emphasises an export-driven economy led by the private sector and built around five pillars that include manufacturing and agro-processing, so the potential benefits of a food-based undertaking of this magnitude were too vast, meaningful and obvious to let slip by...we thank K-T for choosing Eswatini”. He added that the project is foreseen as one of many that will jointly serve to turn around the country's economy in the medium term, while also bringing a boon in the more immediate future. The many benefits to Eswatini of K-T's presence are detailed in Foreign Trade and Investment.



## NEW MONIKER, SAME QUALITY

Long-time investor and forex-earner, the value-adding dairy-processor Parmalat Swaziland, has changed its name to Lactalis Eswatini: the company declared in a statement to the media that 'A fresh era arrives for the Eswatini dairy industry, as a new player enters the local market'. Continuing, the announcement revealed that Parmalat had decided to incorporate the country's name-change with the group's global alignment toward its parent company, namely the Lactalis Group. Consumers and stakeholders were assured that the change was in name only, and would not impact the company's existing range of products, brands, projects or business operations. Lactalis Eswatini also emphasised that it would "remain the home of quality and trusted brands such as Umcege, Emndeni, Emvelo, Eselwa, Lobhalaza, Parmalat, Cabana, Melrose, Président and SteriStumpie, as well as PureJoy and Galbani", which are familiar brands and said to hold strong positions across several dairy product categories.

Historically, Parmalat Swaziland became part of the international Lactalis family in 2011, when Parmalat was bought by the Lactalis Group. The local name change to Lactalis Eswatini was regarded as not only incorporating the kingdom's name change, but also marking the final step towards fully integrating the Eswatini operations with its international parent company. "In Eswatini, the expertise and legacy of the international Lactalis Group now merges with local dairy know-how and passion that has long provided jobs and wholesome dairy products. Indeed, the name change coincides with the 20th anniversary of the company in Eswatini." Lactalis Eswatini Country Manager, Martin Herbst, said it was an exciting step for the local dairy industry and showed that a global dairy group has confidence in the region's business opportunities, and accumulated expertise now joins forces with a proud French family heritage dating back to the early 1900s.

## HOUSEHOLD NAME

Eswatini Fruit Canneries is a Rhodes Food Group (RFG) subsidiary which was established in 1954 when pineapples were first grown commercially in the kingdom. Situated in the fertile Malkerns Valley, it

is today a leading producer of processed pineapple and citrus products: it remains both the sole canning operation of its kind in Eswatini and, via its extensive, self-owned plantations, the country's primary grower of pineapples. The processing plant maintains high food-safety standards, with annual HACCP and BRC certifications in place. The product range comprises canned citrus (orange and grapefruit segments), canned pineapple (slices, pieces and crush), citrus and pineapple juice concentrate, plus a range of prepared fruit and jelly products packed in plastic cups, as well as assorted jams and marmalades in jars and cans. An E20-million jam-production plant was recently added to the factory and it immediately achieved a noteworthy increase in market-share.

RFG is South Africa's leading manufacturer of canned fruit and jams. The group's brands continued to gain market share across core product categories, with the Rhodes brand being the country's market leader in canned fruit, canned pineapple and canned tomato. The group in recent years invested a total of around ZAR382-million in capital projects: these included the ongoing development of new pineapple plantations in Eswatini. On the medium-term outlook, CEO Bruce Henderson said that the group expects to maintain the current positive growth momentum, based on its strong turnaround performance, robust regional sales, expanding margins and the recovery in the international business. Turnover growth will be supported by expected increases in the export of fruit snacks in cups to the USA, and higher canned fruit exports.

## SEAL OF APPROVAL

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade on World Accreditation Day announced that a total of seven laboratories in Eswatini have thus far been accredited by the Southern African Development Community in Accreditation Services (SADCAS): the latter is the multi-economy institution which accredits all conformity-assessment bodies operating the SADC's 13 member states. For its part, World Accreditation Day is a global initiative jointly established in 2008 by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) to raise awareness of the importance of accreditation-related activities.

Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry, Siboniso Nkambule, said that accreditation was accepted worldwide and used by governments as the most transparent and non-discriminatory mechanism of ensuring the competence of conformity-assessment service providers in both the voluntary and regulatory areas: accreditation thus provides peace of mind and assurance that the products and services used in construction, for example, have been verified against national and international standards. He said that Eswatini also has a National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP), which sits in the Regulatory and Quality Infrastructure-Development Department in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, and acts as a link between conformity-assessments bodies in the kingdom and SADCAS. The NAFP is responsible for coordinating, administering, promoting and marketing accreditation activities in Eswatini.

Unpacking the theme, 'Accreditation: Adding Value to the Supply Chain', Nkambule began by describing a supply chain as the system of organizations, people, activities, information and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer, while supply chain activities transform raw materials and components into a finished product that is delivered to the end-user. Furthermore, they consist of everyone involved in getting a product or service ready, including providers of raw materials, manufacturers, transportation companies, wholesale warehouses, in-house staff, stock rooms and the checkout operator at the cash register. On yet another level, the PS said, it also includes the tasks and functions that contribute to moving the product, such as quality control, market research, procurement and strategic sourcing.

Nkambule said it was thus clear that the global nature of supply chains and retail markets requires that businesses have to operate in multiple and often differing regulatory environments, and determining the quality, authenticity and traceability of raw materials or components requires credible and trustworthy information. To make matters yet more complex, as innovation accelerates and the lifecycle of products shortens, markets become more unpredictable and exert increased pressure on supply chains: businesses also need to manage their exposure to risk or disruption from data security

breaches or system failures. Continuing, Nkambule pointed out that procurement was often responsible for up to 70 percent of companies' expenditure, so any disruption could affect profitability, brand reputation and customer loyalty.

The result is that accreditation, underpinned by internationally agreed standards, adds value to supply chains as businesses seek to maximise value and satisfy contractual terms while maintaining a level of confidence that products meet technical specifications and are safe to use. With some 80 percent of trade involving elements of testing, calibration, inspection and certification activities - collectively known as conformity assessment - the independent evaluation of these conformity-assessment bodies against recognised standards to ensure their impartiality, competence and consistency, plays an important role in reducing the costs of trade and doing business, enhancing technology transfer and increasing investment. The PS concluded by encouraging Swati businesses, organizations, manufacturers and government suppliers to embrace accreditation and make it work for the kingdom.

## GUIDED BEGINNINGS

Eswatini's Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP) used the occasion of admitting 12 new start-up companies under a UNDP-supported programme to announce that its Incubation Service now had 29 fledgling enterprises under its wing. RSTP Senior Communications Officer, Senzo Malaza, said that while the institution was pleased to see a number of young people being guided into entrepreneurship, the tally of women-led companies being incubated fell somewhat short of RSTP's declared vision regarding the inherent potential of all people. He said that the current scenario notwithstanding, RSTP remained optimistic that as it continues providing the Incubation Service, "ever more women will join, and before too long Eswatini will have many women involved in the kingdom's business arena".

Malaza also disclosed that, as the crux of RSTP's ultimate aim is to help innovative start-ups and SMEs become bankable and competitive, the RSTP as part of the induction of the newly admitted start-ups, hosted a training and networking event

to which all 29 companies under incubation were invited. Participants were taught, among other things, how to raise money for their businesses: Malaza explained that the exercise was in line with the services that RSTP offers to its mentees and which include capacity building and networking, fundraising support, business facilitation and intellectual property protection, among others.

## TWIN COMPONENTS

RSTP comprises two divisions, namely IT Park and Biotechnology Park, which jointly utilise just over 300 ha of industrial development land that is shared between research laboratories, administration centres and residential buildings.

Biotechnology Park is a multipurpose platform for R&D in bio-related technologies, production, marketing and trading. It houses the Biotechnology Research Centre, Incubation facilities, Service Centre and Agricultural-related Biotechnology facility e.g. pharmaceutical. Core activities:

- **Knowledge Generation**
  - Research Laboratory facilities support research and development efforts in biotechnology in order to optimise the use of natural resources in the Kingdom, and to facilitate the uptake and commercialisation of that research: the primary focus is on medical, industrial and agricultural biotechnology research
  - Partner with local university science departments
- **Knowledge Commercialisation**
  - A Technology Transfer Office will assist in finding the best route to market for new biotechnology innovations produced in Eswatini
  - A Biotechnology Incubator will provide business and technical services for start-up biotechnology companies: those that are still in their initial development stage will be housed in the Business Centre
- **Knowledge Awareness**
  - Biotechnology Park provides platforms to showcase global and national innovations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), esp. in the field of biotechnology

- Biotechnology Park serves as a focal point for various Regional Bioscience Networks (e.g. SANBio): this enables more efficient communication between national bioscience practitioners and the networks, leading to faster awareness of opportunities to pursue and needs to be met by local researchers and their supporting agencies

IT Park is the hub of IT-driven services and products, a platform for research and development in IT, production of high-tech products, capacity building in latest technologies, marketing and trading. IT Park is situated at Phocweni, just five minutes from Biotechnology Park, and shares the 'One Stop' facility that creates an enabling environment for the investor wishing to settle within RSTP. The IT Centre houses the following four Divisions:

- **The National Contact Centre (NCC)** is a business unit and one of the many initiatives taking Eswatini to Developed Nation status. It is also the country's first facility of its kind that offers world-class business-process outsourcing solutions. The Centre seeks to address issues that arise from the rapid changes taking place in the business environment, be they political, economic, regulatory, environmental, social, legal or technological. To address said changes, the NCC uses the latest innovative technologies and a highly skilled workforce to steer businesses forward through offering outsourcing solutions while client-enterprises focus on their core business. This offering goes a long way towards impacting positively on revenues and improving operational efficiencies within business communities locally, regionally and globally.
- **Business Incubator (BI)** Eswatini is a not-for-profit entity which supports SMEs that are developing innovative products and services (or ideas) in the IT sector, including (but not limited to) software, computer hardware, telecommunications and the Internet. The business incubation service offered by RSTP is a comprehensive and highly flexible combination of business development processes, infrastructure and people, designed to nurture innovative start-ups so that they survive and grow through the difficult and vulnerable early stages of development. This service contributes to investment (through local enterprises) by removing barriers to

entrepreneurship, market access and innovation. The country as a whole benefits through job creation and value addition which boosts GDP.

• The Advanced School of IT (ASIT) is affiliated with Aptech Limited, which is a global retail and corporate training solutions provider with a presence in more than 40 countries and a network of over 1 300 training centres worldwide. This ISO9001:2000 certified educational support institution offers customised training solutions and learning content to schools, colleges, universities, governments and businesses. The goal of ASIT under RSTP is to have an ICT-literate Swati society capacitated in Software Development, Multimedia, Cyber Security & Forensics, as well as Hardworking & Networking.

• **National Data Centre (NDC):** ICT has become the major factor that ensures companies are able to gain competitive advantage through quick response to customers' needs. The high costs of ICT infrastructure have had a negative bearing on said advantage, which has reduced budgets for their core services. Outsourcing ICT services through the utilisation of an external Data Centre can serve as a solution to high Total Cost of Ownership (TCO): RSTP's NDC provides IT-managed services through the provision of advanced technology infrastructure that will enable companies to outsource their ICT functions and services, and thereby focus the bulk of their effort and budget on the delivery of their core products and services.

RSTP is designated as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), offering lucrative financial and/or tax incentives. The qualifying criteria for an Operator or Enterprise or Investor intending to locate within the SEZ can be found at <https://rstp.org.sz/>

## INVESTORS/FINANCIERS

The government-owned Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) states that its mission is to invest in economically and financially viable, technically feasible and environmentally friendly projects that have sustainable, medium to long-term returns and growth effects on the kingdom's economy and stakeholders. The vision is to be Eswatini's industrialisation frontrunner by 2022. The Corporation currently provides funding structures comprising one or a mix of Debt, Equity,

Mezzanine and Venture Capital, and supports undertakings in a wide range of sectors. Those that relate primarily to this chapter include, but are not limited to:

• **MANUFACTURING** - The variety of sub-sectors necessitates varying selection-criteria that are based on project types, development stage in the business cycle, cost associated with the investment and the general performance of the sub-industry within Eswatini, the region and the world. A non-exhaustive list of clusters includes:

- o Precision Engineering
- o Electronics
- o Biomedical Manufacturing
- o Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing
- o Chemicals
- o Transport Engineering
- o General Manufacturing
- o Plastic and Paper
- o Food and Beverages
- o Clothing and Textiles

• **INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING** – As a means to enhance industrial development and spur economic growth in Eswatini, ENIDC is interested in funding new and existing corporations that are aiming to expand output, markets and operations.

• **TECHNOLOGY** – ENIDC encourages investments into new industries with an emphasis on invention and innovation. These enterprises must be geared to bring into the market new types of industries, or be improving existing technology ventures. The Corporation therefore also support projects that have graduated from incubation stage under the Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP).

• **AGRO-PROCESSING** – ENIDC finances enterprises in most types of agricultural processing except sugarcane. The enterprises must possess strong properties of sustainability, and be biased towards organic production and processing,

niche-market targeting and substantial innovation.

• **FOOD AND BEVERAGES** - ENIDC finances business undertakings in food processing and those that are within its value-chain. In order to support a broad-based growth approach, the Corporation encourages local enterprises to source their inputs from within Eswatini. The enterprises be must geared for long-term growth that is sustainable.

• **MINING & BENEFICIATION** – ENIDC realises the positive effects of extracting minerals from the ground and improving their economic value. As the country has rich deposits of a number of minerals, ENIDC is motivated to invest in the mining sector through establishments that will extract maximum value and spur economic growth. All establishments in this sector must be in compliance with the Ministry of Natural Resources' laws and regulations.

Industrial Development Company of Eswatini (IDCE) was formed in 1987 and is a joint venture between government and three financial institutions:

- Eswatini National Provident Fund (61.95 percent)
- Eswatini Government (34.95 percent)
- Standard Bank Eswatini (1.55 percent)
- Nedbank Eswatini (1.55 percent)

The Company fulfils its role by promoting and investing in financially viable projects in sectors such as:

- Manufacturing
- Property Development
- Transport
- Agri-business
- Tourism
- Services
- SME

IDCE's Product Offering:

- Corporate Loans and Equity Financing – With almost 30 years' experience, IDCE has acquired in-depth knowledge and business skills that make it an ideal partner in equity participation that varies in accordance with the need on the table
- Agricultural Loans – for customers engaged in farming activities on both titled land and SNL
- Asset Leasing Finance – e.g. heavy machinery and equipment; assistance with the importation of requirements is also available
- SME Finance – Corporate loans are available to all sectors of the economy, with a keen focus on manufacturing, tourism, service industry, agribusiness and others
- Leasing of industrial buildings – IDCE owns a substantial part of Matsapha Industrial Site; buildings are scaled in sizes, making them suitable for fulfilling a variety of needs
- Advisory Services – Having operated in the local

economy for many years, IDCE offers a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with all current and prospective clients

## MINING & QUARRYING

At the launch of Eswatini's Strategic Roadmap to 2022, the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Peter Bhembe, said that mining and energy were two of the main areas towards which development efforts would be directed, and in some cases were interdependent. One such instance in the country's striving to generate its own power is the goal "to generate 300MW of electricity from fossil fuel", which basically means to build a power station that will burn local coal.

(As researched by the Central Bank of Eswatini, the persistence of geological constraints continues to impact negatively on coal production volumes in the country, particularly yields.)

Minister Bhembe also disclosed that plans are afoot to revive the Ngwenya Iron Ore Mine, from which to produce steel locally and thereby turn the country into a manufacturer as opposed to a supplier of raw material. According to archaeologists, the Ngwenya site dates back some 42 000 years, making it the oldest mine in the world. Anglo-American Corporation between 1964 and 1977 removed an estimated 20-million tonnes of ore for exporting to the Far East: it built a railway line through Eswatini and Mozambique to a purpose-built loading facility at Maputo Harbour, all of which remains to this day. Anglo-American exited the kingdom in 1978,

and the Ngwenya mine lay dormant until 2011 when, armed with new technology, the India-headquartered Salgaocar Group moved in to 'mine' the long-standing dumps. A low-grade, low-cost iron ore was extracted and shipped abroad via the existing infrastructure, until 2013, that is, when global demand for steel plummeted and took the price of iron ore with it. Unable to sustain this scenario, Salgaocar exited the kingdom in 2014.

## NATIONAL OFFERING

Eswatini also has deposits of gold, diamonds and various minerals, and government recently declared that it "wishes to reverse the decline of the mining industry by attracting new investment in the exploration for and exploitation of mineral resources". Government acknowledged that in order to achieve this, it must establish an enabling environment for investors that is based upon modern regulatory arrangements and competitive terms. Recognising that private sector investors seek to operate profitably, be internationally competitive and satisfy their shareholders' and employees' expectations, government disclosed that it is establishing a Mining Bill that will promote and maintain:

- a conducive macroeconomic environment for mining investment
- a stable and predictable regulatory environment in which investors are treated in an even-handed and transparent manner
- access by investors to, and security of tenure over, areas of mineral potential
- a stable, predictable, competitive and fair fiscal regime

Government stressed that its policies are directed at large and small-scale mining operations, both of which must be conducted responsibly: neglect of the natural environment and harm to local communities is not acceptable, and Eswatini must secure the full economic and social benefits that mining-development offers. The Geological Survey and Mines Department in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy has technical reports and bulletins, together with geological maps, all of which are available to the public along with relevant information pertaining to the 'Mineral Resources of Eswatini' overview-document on [www.gov.sz](http://www.gov.sz)





# TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

*Eswatini's main attractions – its natural and cultural heritage endowments – are being leveraged in order to develop and ultimately realise the kingdom's tourism potential for the benefit of Emaswati. Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg declared that strong justification of this strategy lay in the recent laudation of the country by global travel authority and influential publication, Lonely Planet, thanks to which Eswatini was now a recognised international tourist destination of choice. Lonely Planet annually features a highly anticipated collection of the best travel destinations, trends, journeys and experiences to have in the year ahead: its glowing endorsement of Eswatini was filed under 'Best in Travel' for the applicable period, and the country was ranked '5th Best World Destination to Visit'.*

As appeared in the Lonely Planet 'Top 10 Countries' category: "Petite, pleasant and packed with culture, adventure and legendary wildlife, the Kingdom of Eswatini is one of Southern Africa's most underrated (and least visited) destinations. A new international airport, as well as improved road infrastructure between it, conservation areas and the capital, are aimed to increase visitor numbers in the years ahead. The varied landscapes within its parks and reserves provide one exciting revelation after another, whether it's ziplining, trekking, white-water rafting or mind-blowing rhino encounters. Mix in a pervading sense of peace and enthralling cultural festivities, and you'll be smiling all the way home."

Unmissable experiences in Eswatini recommended by Lonely Planet's experts include:

- Watching a crash of almost a dozen wild rhino bathe, lounge and drink at one of the many secluded waterholes within Mkhaya Game Reserve
- Spotting zebra, eland, wildebeest, warthog and more while on a short stroll, day hike or challenging multi-day trek in the rough mountain terrain of Malolotja Nature Reserve
- Observing one of the continent's greatest cultural events, the Umhlanga Dance Festival, which is held at the usually off-limits Ludzidzini Royal Residence near Lobamba

Lonely Planet's VP of Experience, Tom Hall, said: "Eswatini offers mind-blowing wildlife watching, stunning scenery, adrenaline-boosting activities and colourful traditions, yet it has remained relatively undiscovered...experience the wonder of Eswatini ahead of the crowds, as a new international airport and improved infrastructure make the country more accessible."

Lonely Planet's editorial continued: "Eswatini features fifth in (this edition's) list of top countries, which is hardly surprising when the country has so much to offer. As one of the last monarchies remaining in the whole of Africa, the traditions that originate from centuries ago continue within this laid-back nation. Group Editor of Lonely Planet Magazines, Peter Grunert, recently travelled to Eswatini for six days and his trip was packed full of some of the

country's must-see attractions. As well as staying at a community-run camp in the remote Lubombo Mountains and experiencing rural life and traditions in Eswatini, Peter also spent time at all three of the country's Big Game Parks, including the famed Mkhaya, known for offering some of the best rhino experiences in Africa. The full details of this trip will be revealed in the next edition of the Lonely Planet Magazine in a 'gigantic extravaganza of a feature', so make sure you pick up a copy!"

## REACTIONS

- Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) representative, Kelly White, said: "As an underrated yet up and-coming African country, it's an honour to have Eswatini named as one of the world's top countries for travellers and for it to be featured in Lonely Planet. This is an accolade that the country truly deserves, and we're confident it will encourage more people to visit in the coming years."
- Prime Minister Dlamini announced that "We will be leveraging on our selection as a top five destination to visit in the world by Lonely Planet through an intensified marketing programme. Eswatini is scheduled to exhibit at the Dubai Expo that will bring together millions of people from around the world to sample tourism products from the 100-plus countries that will participate".
- Finance Minister Rijkenberg said that in order to build on what he called "significant progress" made by the tourism industry, government will review the Tourism Bill in an exercise that intends to create an even more enabling environment for the tourism sector to thrive.

## WILDLIFE & SURROUNDS

Eswatini's rich variety of landscapes and habitats gives it a profusion of fauna and flora: the number of species is impressive by any standard. The country offers 17 protected areas that are home to a very wide range of animals, including the sought-after 'Big 5', and is one of the best places on the continent for rhino experiences. The latter include tracking on foot as well as viewing by 4x4, and the chance to see both black and white rhino. Eswatini is also

the perfect place to encounter many of the smaller yet also fascinating creatures that receive less attention elsewhere. The kingdom is furthermore a birdwatcher's paradise, with some 500 species recorded in the country, and thanks to its varied landscapes and wilderness areas, flora include over 3 500 indigenous species, about 25 of which are endemic.

With the exception of desert and beach, every geographical feature of Africa's terrain is found within Eswatini:

- magnificent mountain scenery with rivers, waterfalls and gorges
- unique rock formations which are among the world's most ancient
- lush and fertile valleys
- typical African bush

From west to east, Eswatini moves from mountainous Highveld through Middleveld to Lowveld, then rises again to the Lubombo Mountains. Altitudes range from 21m to 1 800m (70ft to 6 000 ft), yet the country's east and west borders are less than 200 km (125 miles) apart. The Highveld is a land of hills, waterfalls and great buttresses of ancient rock - the country's most dramatic and impressive landscapes - while the Middleveld is an area of undulating bush and moist savannah, and the Lowveld is hot, bush country that harbours Eswatini's major game reserves and offers easy access to areas of genuine wilderness.

**Big Game Parks (BGP)** - the globally renowned leading light in Africa's war against the poaching of rhino and elephant - is a non-profit trust and the life work of pioneering conservationist, Ted Reilly. Born in Mlilwane in 1938, he was profoundly affected by witnessing the kingdom's wildlife reduced to the verge of extinction before his 21st birthday: using limited personal resources and displaying absolute dedication, he consequently turned the family's highly productive 460 ha farm into a sanctuary. Once Reilly's fledgling operation was under way, he approached King Sobhuza II for game, and that was the beginning of a long and close personal association with the monarchy.

**Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary** was opened to the public on 12 July 1964, and 14 years later proclaimed a Nature Reserve. It is thus the kingdom's longest-established reserve and, as its 4 450 ha are situated almost alongside the Mbabane-Manzini highway, is the park most frequented by visitors on shorter stays. A blend of forested mountain slopes and open grasslands provides excellent photo-ops of giraffe, zebra, antelope, small predators and birdlife, including different species of wild fowl. Most-photographed, perhaps, are the enormous crocodiles that bask atop the small islands that dot Mlilwane's watering-holes. Chubeka Trails is an opportunity to explore these delights on horseback, while guided walks are also on offer. The sanctuary's restaurant and tavern straddle a hippo pool and are well patronised by locals and visitors alike. The choice of accommodation includes Reilly's Rock Hilltop Lodge, Sondzela Backpackers and a campsite: the latter comprises 20 individual, level sites, each with a dedicated barbeque stand and electricity points, and some with a shared water-source.

**Hlane Royal National Park** in the country's northeast occupies the area that was historically a hunting ground enjoyed by the monarchy and named by King Sobhuza II. It was from here that the latter sourced game for Ted Reilly's Mlilwane project, and is today held in trust for the nation by His Majesty King Mswati III. Hlane is strategically ideal for visitors on the much-frequented Kruger National Park-Eswatini-Maputo route. The vast, predominantly flat reserve is dotted with large, shallow pans and thousand-year-old hardwood conservancies, and has for the past three decades been the focal point of concerted species-reintroduction. It boasts the kingdom's most extensive game herds and largest numbers of Southern Africa's fabled birds of prey, all viewed in comfort and safety from well-maintained roads.

**Mkhaya Game Reserve** was established in 1979 when Reilly decided it was the ideal place of refuge for endangered species, starting with the pure breed of cattle that had accompanied Nguni-speaking tribes on their exodus from Central Africa. Reilly then expanded his vision to include many wild animals, and Mkhaya subsequently evolved into a world-renowned centre of conservation for elephant,

buffalo, black and white rhino plus several variants of antelope - yet another of Eswatini's success stories in sustainable land use and the protection of endangered species. Visitors are escorted by wildlife personnel aboard customised game-viewing vehicles.

## HERITAGE-GUARDIAN

The Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) proclaims and manages national parks and reserves, museums and monuments, and is responsible for the National Environmental Education Programme. Ecotourism is an important component of ENTC activities and through which it contributes significantly to the country's overall tourism economy. The parastatal entity also partners with peer bodies in South Africa and Mozambique under the Lubombo Trans-Frontier Conservation Area in a spatial development initiative that promotes trans-boundary conservation and economic development. As an official declaration reads, "It is important to ensure that all ENTC activities have a minimum negative impact on the long-term conservation of the kingdom's natural and cultural heritage, as the organization has a vital role to play in enhancing the quality of life in Eswatini for future generations. The ENTC's responsibilities are on a national level and are not restricted to existing ENTC-managed areas." The latter comprise:

- **Mlawula Nature Reserve** in the kingdom's eastern reaches forms part of the Eswatini-Mozambique South Africa Lubombo Trans-Frontier Conservation and Resource Area that was promulgated in June 2000. The reserve's 16 500 ha encompass transitional landscapes between dry savannas and moist coastal thickets, thereby incorporating distinct ecological zones - mountain ridge, valley and plateau. Mlawula's northern boundary is marked by the perennial Mbuluzi River which is fed by the steep forested ravines that dissect the Lubombo plateau. Locally unique and picturesque are the rain-filled seasonal pans that occur along the plateau's higher reaches. Mlawula offers accommodation in the Magadzavane, which is a 40-bed lodge with furnished en-suite units, restaurant, bar, conference centre and pool. The complex was opened in March 2012

and is supplemented by a Sara tented camp and a spacious main camp for tents and caravans. Road access has been significantly improved, funded by the Republic of China-Taiwan.

- **Malolotsha Nature Reserve** on the kingdom's northwest flank stretches from the historic iron ore mine at Ngwenya almost as far as Pigg's Peak, and boasts the country's highest waterfall among mountain scenery regarded by many as Southern Africa's answer to the Alps. A vast array of habitats can be enjoyed via extensive trails - up to weeklong hikes - or joining a Treetop Canopy Tour and gliding through the forests' upper reaches to catch sight of striking rock formations and towering cliff faces. Malolotsha's flora is widely varied - the wildflowers in spring are particularly famous - while the lists of birds and mammals each contain an impressive number of rarities. Accommodation in this, one of the kingdom's most popular nature reserves, is a choice between log cabins and a campsite.
- **Mantenga Nature Reserve** is 725 ha of Middle- and Highveld habitat in a secluded corner of the Ezulwini Valley. Its southern boundary is formed by the bilharzia-free Little Usuthu River and the 95-metres-high Mantenga Falls which is Eswatini's best-known and largest water-volume cascade. Swimming and picnicking are popular adjuncts to birdwatching and photographing the many variants of small and medium-size animals that abound. The Swati Cultural Village is an excellent working reconstruction of a traditional homestead from around the 1850s: it provides the visitor with an opportunity to experience all the complexities and nuances of traditional Swati life. The venue's schedule of events includes spectacular performances by a dance troupe which has gained international renown through tours around the world. Accommodation is available in the form of luxury chalets with all modern features such as high-speed internet access and 3-D/HD-compatible TV.
- **National Museum, King Sobhuza II Memorial Park**, Houses of Parliament and Ludzidzini Royal Settlement, all of which are to be found in the kingdom's spiritual heart-centre of

# Discover Eswatini

## *The Royal Experience*

Explore the natural beauty of Eswatini and discover our wealth of attractions. Participate in our Cultural Heritage and Royal ceremonies. Live it up in our comfortable accommodation establishments and adventurous activities!



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The Kingdom of  
**Eswatini**  
a royal experience

Lobamba on the edge of Ezulwini Valley. Ludzidzini encompasses the Queen Mother's kraal and is ringed by the plains on which the nation gathers for the earlier-detailed, annual Incwala and Umhlanga celebrations. With the Mdzimba Mountains as its backdrop, this area has been playing host to Eswatini's royalty for over two centuries.

It is said that there is no better way to explore the kingdom's multi-varied terrain than on foot, and the nature reserves are well known for their excellent range of self-guided hiking trails that offer visitors the opportunity to dictate the pace best suited to their group. Paths and trails in many locations across the country facilitate hikes ranging in duration from a couple of hours to many days, and give access to places and views that vehicles cannot reach. Alternatively, anyone with initiative and a good map or GPS can simply head off into countryside. Yet another option is the list of accredited, reputable, specialist adventure/hiking-tour operators.

Exploring on horseback offers perhaps even greater freedom than on foot, and those in the know say that views always seem to be more spectacular when seen from the back of a horse. Eswatini offers visitors the opportunity to discover its natural beauty by traversing any of a number of horse-riding trails and, again, duration can vary between a couple of hours and a number of days, depending on experience and ability. The main stables all have good facilities, cater to all levels, and are found at Mlilwane, Ezulwini Valley, Mhlambanyatsi, Hawane Resort and Malkerns.

For the even more adventurous, Malolotja Nature Reserve is home to a thrilling tree-top canopy tour of zip-wires, bridges and platforms, while various mountains and gorges provide opportunities for climbing and abseiling. Moving underground, a local adventure operator has pioneered adventure-caving in Southern Africa's only major granite cave-system. On the other hand, a high-speed, 'wet 'n' wild' adventure lies in wait on the Great Usuthu River, where it is said that Eswatini's white-water rafting is among the most thrilling anywhere.

## CULTURAL FESTIVITIES

The Kingdom of Eswatini proudly embraces and upholds its unique, ancient traditions: both the

monarchy and the people actively maintain and preserve their distinctive cultural heritage with a devotion that is probably unmatched anywhere in Africa. Visitors can get a better idea of traditional African culture here than perhaps anywhere else in the region, and what is seen, including spectacular festivals, has not simply been resuscitated for the tourist dollar, but is authentic. And while the deeply significant **Umhlanga** and **Incwala** - traditional ceremonies that involve tens of thousands of Emaswati and which attract visitors from all over the world – are detailed in Introduction, as is the more frolicsome **Buganu**, traditional attire, ceremonies and dancing are to be found throughout the country at all times of the year.

The kingdom is however also a thoroughly modern, sophisticated country, sharing with the rest of the world a 21st century culture of music, dance, theatre and the arts that 'trend' on social media. Festivals of this ilk are growing steadily in both number and size.

## TOURIST MAGNET

The annual MTN Bushfire festival of music, arts and environmental consciousness, usually slated for the last weekend in May, has become so popular as to witness over 26 000 attendees from 60 countries around the globe journey to the peaceful Malkerns Valley of Eswatini for an energising and uplifting celebration of African creativity. Winner of the African Responsible Tourism Awards' Best Sustainable Event category, hailed by CNN as one of the "7 African music festivals you really have to see", and listed by the BBC as a "Top African Festival", MTN Bushfire is described by its organizers as "more than a festival, it's a living, breathing ecosystem deeply rooted in African soil, yet inclusive and welcoming to international guests.

"This uniquely African yet globally infused experience embraces thousands in an atmosphere of tolerance and passionate commitment to music, the arts and the environment. With its clarion call to ignite action for social change, MTN Bushfire has always been committed to working with and uplifting the Swati community. Over the past decade, MTN Bushfire has continually brought its fire with a significant percentage of profits supporting local charities including Young Heroes, which is an initiative that

supports over 1 000 AIDS orphans. MTN Bushfire invites all fans of music, the arts, cultural exploration and environmental sustainability, to become part of the thriving community that is MTN Bushfire."

## IMPORTANCE

The most recent edition attracted just over 30 000 attendees, for whose pleasure a total of 294 artists from across the African diaspora performed in the four stage areas. To evince one aspect of the event's value to the kingdom's economy, between the Friday afternoon and Sunday night finale, accredited traders within the festival site generated E4.5-million turnover from their wide spectrum of offerings. These calculations were made by the Bushfire team together with South African Cultural Observatory, which is an international company that calculates festivals' economic impact.

It was also reported that more than 700 Emaswati were employed by the festival, carrying out duties that ranged from cleaning to security and clerical. To paraphrase its manifesto: "More than simply a music festival, MTN Bushfire curates inspired environments where people from all walks of life collectively come to ignite their flame. Through its range of experiential platforms, the festival offers a diverse and authentic experience with a laid-back atmosphere."

## CULINARY-CENTRED

Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival's sophomore edition clearly evinced that the "sensory experience unlike any other" is worth its salt. Over 6 000 attendees converged on the lavish lawns of the House on Fire Sculpture Garden for this unique celebration of the tastes, sounds, sights and aromas of Eswatini and the Southern African region. Among the seven culinary programme showcases was the masterclass presented by Siba Mtongana who hosts the acclaimed TV show, 'Cooking with Siba', while aural entertainment was delivered by 13 recording artists from the kingdom and neighbouring states. The festival also celebrates the dynamic textures, striking prints and vivid colours that the continent has to offer, so its carefully curated and authentically African programme accordingly features high-end African fashion and visual arts.

The sophomore event's theme – 'A Return to the

African Future' - was carried through to the Design Café which is described as "a space that takes you on a journey of celebration through sculpture and design works". All elements were conceptualised and infused with simple materials that preserve Eswatini culture and embrace the environment. A major development of the festival's second edition was the option for partygoers to overnight within the House on Fire grounds, thanks to a state-of-the-art glamping site complete with en-suite hot showers and toilets to complete the home-away-from-home ambience.

To show that the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival is already playing an important role in the country's economy, House on Fire Marketing Manager, Bongani Dlamini, disclosed at the After-Buzz review and media conference that more than E1-million revenue was generated by the 20 accredited traders who plied their wares at the second edition.

## LOUD & PROUD

Riders Ranch in Sidvokodvo has in the last weekend of August for each of the past 30 years hosted the Swati Rally for devotees of 'petrol-sports' – initially high-powered motorcycles, but recently expanded to include cars. The former remain predominant, however, and the event's popularity has grown to the point where some 10 000 bikers arrive from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Mozambique to join the Swati contingent in a time-honoured routine: dance through Friday night to live bands and tunes spun by local and South African DJs, a mass-rally on Saturday morning traversing the kingdom's scenic routes, back to Riders Ranch for an afternoon and early evening of tyre-shredding, daredevil exhibitions and contests, party through the night, and on Sunday take a favourite route one last time before heading home.

Rally founder, Carlos Paiva, is proud to point out that the gathering plays its part in boosting Eswatini's economy through tourism, to the tune of more than E30-million annually into the accommodation and catering sectors, among others. The organization also spearheads community-upliftment initiatives in and around Sidvokodvo. He expresses appreciation for the support of the nation which has helped the

rally gain continuous momentum, and declares that its massive impact on tourism is also largely due to vehicle-financing institution, FNB/WesBank, which sponsors the major prize and provides speed-points and a temporary ATM to help elevate service delivery to international standards.

Eswatini Arts and Music Association praises the rally for its many years of providing significant support to and exposure of local musicians, while Eswatini Tourism Authority annually sets up traditional village structures at the site to act as photo-ops and to pique visitors' interest in the kingdom's major cultural sites and time-honoured rituals.

### PEDAL-POWERED

The annual Inyatsi Swazi Frontier 'hardcore' mountain-biking (MTB) race each October is listed among the world's 300 best cycling events: the stage-race for a maximum of 80 pairs is held over three days, and after setting off from the Hawane Resort covers 180 km of the kingdom's spectacularly scenic and rugged northwest. Each edition attracts enthusiasts from across Southern Africa as well as from North Africa, the USA, UK and Europe.

Each year in June, Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary hosts a less arduous competition known as the Imvelo MTB Classic and which comprises a series of races over various distances, the longest being 64 km. The maximum 500 participants arrive from

all over Southern Africa, and the event has since inception in 2004 received accolades for using sponsorship money and race-entry fees solely to fund community-development projects.

Other annual MTB events include the Ngwenya Glass MTB Challenge. Participants convene at the Ngwenya Glass Factory, from where they have three routes from which to choose, namely the 70km Marathon, 40km Classic and 27km Family Ride.

Competition aside, a mountain-bike is also a highly popular way by which to explore Eswatini's wonderful landscapes. As with walking and trekking, the more adventurous visitor can set out across the country on their own, but there are also specific and much-frequented trails in a number of locations, including Mhlambanyatsi, Hawane, Hlane, Malolotja, Mbuluzi and Shewula. At Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, a well-patronised Cycling Safari enables the whole family to encounter the animal inhabitants while riding around the grounds at their own leisure.

### THE WINNERS

The Royal Villas is a multi-consecutive 'Leading Hotel in the Kingdom of Eswatini' category-winner at the annual World Travel Awards Africa. The victorious General Manager, Karol Jozzkowski, declared the most recent win "a huge achievement for The Royal Villas, and it once again also puts the country on the map". He spoke of the award as the equivalent

of an Oscar, and as such should be celebrated by Emaswati: "This is big, especially because it's the travel sector across the continent that nominates. What that means is that seasoned travellers are aware of our services, while the accolade will also attract first-time tourists...the award is coveted, prestigious and means a lot to us."

Also present at the gala presentation ceremony were Eswatini's Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, and the official representative of shareholder Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, both of whom said that they were extremely proud of the hotel. The latter furthermore thanked the Minister for attending the event and thereby giving added weight to the award and the hotel's well-deserved recognition. "As a shareholder, Tibiyo Taka Ngwane is very proud that The Royal Villas continues to do well, and also proud of its efforts to make the Kingdom of Eswatini's Vision 2022 a reality," he concluded.

The Royal Villas offers a choice of 14 "uncommonly spacious" villas, each of which has a King Suite, Queen Suite, Standard Queen and Standard Twin: two additionally include family rooms, and all are set in a lush estate with views of the Mdzimba Mountains. The Lihawu Restaurant offers exquisite pan-African cuisine, complemented by the Sivuno premier wine cellar. A swimming pool and hot Jacuzzi are served by a terrace bar, while guests also have a choice of fully equipped, well-appointed dining rooms, lounges

and outdoor settings in which to relax. Mdzimba Conference and Entertainment Centre is state of the art, with everything expected of a five-star venue. The Royal Villas is conveniently close to a casino, golf course, shopping centre and craft market.

### AMBER TIPPLE

The kingdom's Defiant rum ('Gold' variant) – produced by Jackalberry distillery – recently scooped top honours at an internationally-recognised tasting competition, namely the SA Rum Jury Annual Blind-Tasting and Industry Enrichment Conference. A panel comprising nine judges who are acknowledged experts in the field of rum, tastes and rates product originating from all over the world. The blind-tasting method "avoids any preconceived perceptions based on a known varietal or the label of the rum – it emphasises merit on taste alone". Jackalberry is a small-batch distillery: it produces two other variants of Defiant rum – 'Spiced' and 'Black' – and uses only sugarcane and pure spring water from Eswatini, matured in French and American charred oak using both traditional and futuristic scientific techniques. The result of these three elements is according to Jackalberry a "truly singular, clean, vibrant, smooth, refined taste".

Founder of the SA Rum Jury, Andy Kiloh, asserted that the competition was respected, and its Gold Medal regarded as one of the most reliable indicators of excellence. He described winning a



medal as “indeed an impressive achievement for any rum having undergone evaluation from our highly discerning judges. Emphasising integrity and impartiality, our competition takes great pride in ensuring that all entries are treated with care and consideration by our carefully selected panel. Products awarded a gold medal are exceptional, near the pinnacle of achievement in their particular category, the ones that set the standard for all others of their type”.

Jackalberry Marketing Manager, Seipati Jonga, said that the company – which also produces a brand of gin – was very proud to have won the award: “Defiant gold rum defies convention and makes any occasion an event to remember. The smooth, opulent, fragrant, wood-matured flavours sit side by side with the soft, golden sweetness. We make rum for non-rum drinkers, and this makes it difficult to enter a competition with judges who know so much about rum and have such high standards... we were surprised to win the top award. To have an unconventional rum that appeals to the traditionalists in the field is what really makes us proud, especially when being compared to much bigger and more established brands and products.”

The Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs said that Jackalberry's achievement was welcome news for the kingdom, especially on the tourism side, as it meant that Eswatini was on the map and recognised in other countries: “This is fantastic, and we as a Ministry are excited because this is very good for Eswatini. We will go far in making our rum and gin part of our marketing tools to attract tourists to the country.”

## SNAPSHOTS

- **Ezulwini** – ‘Place of Heaven’ – is both the valley that runs southeast between Mbabane and Manzini, and its rapidly developing town with bespoke residential area. This is where tourism in Eswatini began, and today its attractions include hotels, casinos, shopping malls, restaurants, art galleries, cinema, craft markets, hot springs, riding stables, nature reserve, golf course and cultural village. Under construction is an International Convention Centre with adjacent Five-Star Hotel.
- **Pigg's Peak**, with its reminders of the kingdom's

Colonial-era gold rush, is currently witnessing a resurgence of interest in its remaining deposits. The town's name derives from that of a French prospector, William Pigg, whose ‘peak’ refers to the summit of Eswatini's tallest mountain, the nearby Emlembe. In the immediately surrounding hills are Stone Age caves, complete with well preserved Bushman paintings.

- **Bulembu**, 18 km west of Pigg's Peak, was in 2001 almost emptied by the closure of Havelock Mine – the settlement's original name – but has in recent years been brought back to life by Bulembu Ministries. The village nestles at the foot of Emlembe mountain and is surrounded by lush green hills and eucalyptus forests. Bulembu Country Lodge comprises painstakingly renovated period houses that present a mix of history and nature, beauty and comfort. Visitors have the opportunity to hike to Emlembe's summit, take less arduous guided walks and museum visits, observe Bulembu's community enterprises in action and even volunteer for its community care initiative centred around hundreds of orphans and vulnerable children.
- **Phophonyane Nature Reserve** is part of a 600 ha conservancy in the mountainous northwest and falls within the Barberton Centre of Endemism, which is an area of global biodiversity-significance. Its central feature is the Phophonyane Falls, a series of cascades and waterfalls that stretches for three kilometres along the boundary between two continental blocks of the Earth's crust. Definitive geological finds have been made there. Other main features include granite cliffs and the Mbeve Falls and stream which are flanked by a riverine forest in which eight orchid species have been identified. In the reserve as a whole, more than 400 species of trees and 250 species of birds are to be found, along with numerous species of mammals and reptiles. A network of well-maintained trails leads to spectacular vantage points offering vistas that sweep to the Gbolondo and Makhonjwa mountain ranges.
- **Hawane Nature Reserve** lies between the southern sector of Malolotsha Game Park and the city of Mbabane, which is supplied with water from a dam within the reserve. The

relatively small area includes part of the habitat of Eswatini's endemic and rare ‘red-hot poker’ succulent plant.

- **Ngwempisi Gorge** cuts through the southern region's scenic drive area in the vicinity of Shiselweni. Accommodation choices amid the tall cliffs and deep gorges, cool rivers and hot springs include a fitted-out cave.

## EYE-OPENING

Community-based tourism helps rural folk participate in and benefit from the sector. It is today a very popular means of experiencing Emaswati's renowned hospitality and seeing the country's picturesque mountains, hills, valleys and plains from the perspective of traditional day-to-day life. Thanks largely to seed-funding by the European Commission, many rural and peri-urban entrepreneurs offer guided tours and homestays that adhere to set standards while opening up for visitors' enjoyment the ‘secret’ treasures of Eswatini's lesser-trod pathways.

- **Luphohlo Recreational Park** near Mbabane is a Siphocosini Community Venture and the country's latest such initiative. Named after its focal-point dam, the park is ideal for fishing, swimming and scenic walks: ‘sitting-bays’ and ablution facilities have been built.
  - **All Out Africa Walking Tour:** This half-day excursion begins with an introduction to Swati history at the National Museum, passes through one of the oldest and most famous villages in Eswatini – the Royal Residence – before exploring homes, small-scale ethnic businesses, an art gallery and concluding with a traditional Swati barbeque. The tour is led by an experienced local guide steeped in indigenous folklore.
  - **Sibebe Rock** is the world's largest exposed granite dome – often compared to Australia's Uluru (Ayers Rock) – and offers a breath-taking experience to those who venture along its trails which are regarded as among Eswatini's most interesting. Walking tours are run by the local community and much of the vast array of wildlife to be seen is unique to the area.
  - **Mahamba Gorge Lodge:** Perched on the edge of the Mkhondvo River gorge and offering a panoramic vista, the venue has strong links to
- the community: these include traditional Swati breakfast prepared by a local chef and a selection of local crafts that specialise in handmade models of structures such as the area's historic church and traditional beehive huts.
- **Nsangwini Rock Art Centre** is situated high above the Komati River and is the best-preserved local site of rock-art produced by the San people over 4 000 years ago. All profits are reinvested in community projects.
  - **Lonhlupheko Craft Market** is one of the jewels in the crown of Siteki and where vendors compete good-naturedly in what has become a flagship project for joint community entrepreneurship. Lonhlupheko is also known as one of the best places to learn about Swati culture, direct from the local community.
  - **Shewula Mountain Camp** is a successful community venture that offers the opportunity to stay among Swati people in hatted accommodation and experience local life and culture. Guests are encouraged to explore the surroundings with local guides.
  - **Maguga Craft Outlet and Viewsite** overlook the majestic Maguga Dam which is among the continent's highest. At the Craft Outlet, talented community members can be seen at work and their unique mementos purchased at reasonable prices.
  - **Maguga Lodge Hiking Trails** give visitors the opportunity to see some of the country's most fascinating and beautiful destinations, be fully immersed in Swati culture, and witness evidence of its awe-inspiring history. All three routes use local guides, and profits are invested back into the community.
  - **Ngwempisi Hiking Trail/Khelekhele Horse Trail:** The 33-km Ngwempisi Trail delivers vistas of plateaux, woodlands, riverine forest and mountainous terrain, along with an opportunity to see many birds, interesting flora and fascinating geology. Khelekhele Horse Trail offers the opportunity to explore the area on horseback: both projects are run by the local community as part of the ETA initiative to ensure that tourism benefits all sectors.

# ESWATINI'S PIONEERS OF CONSERVATION

Parks are not only for wildlife, parks are also for people. Believing that one without the other is a recipe for poverty, the Mission of Big Game Parks is:

To promote environmental literacy;

To develop, conserve and expand her land base to increase scale, ecological viability and protected biodiversity;

To achieve and sustain optimal economic viability in order to facilitate a safe and secure future for Eswatini's historically beleaguered wildlife within representative habitats;

To promote and to marry eco-tourism with all other ethical components of environmentally friendly land use and to develop these collectively as justification against contesting land use;

To uphold and sustain the highest levels of conservation integrity, discipline, conservation ethics and the rule of law as necessary elements to conserve nature and natural resources;

To propound the necessity for limits to growth, thereby keeping options open for a better quality of life for future generations of wildlife and people;

To serve our King and country with honour and loyalty.



The Kingdom of Eswatini's  
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# ENVIRONMENT

*When government officially launched the Clean Eswatini Campaign, it was by means of a rousing address aimed at inspiring the nation at large to turn the tide against environmental degradation. The speech asserted that Emaswati at all levels of society share a common responsibility in the pursuit of a clean and greener kingdom - as identified in government's long-term strategic vision - and that the attainment of which demands the adoption of waste management principles.*

It was pointed out that every citizen enjoys the fundamental right to live in a clean, protected environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being. And while the Environment Management Act calls upon citizens to avoid generating waste, it also stipulates that where such cannot be avoided, there should be measures in place to minimise its toxicity and promote re-use, recycle and resource-recovery, which fall to government. The latter's spokesman issued a reminder that these measures are employed in the context of achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns, which is Goal 12 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: as a corollary, shifting towards a resource trajectory is more relevant now as the kingdom strives to promote green economy initiatives and move towards a circular economy model.

The situation thus calls for multi-tiered strategies, the statement continued, if Eswatini's cities, towns and villages are to be freed from waste, as littering in the

face of legislation has already had an adverse impact on the nation's environment, health and economy. It cited poor waste management as a result of littering and illegal dumping creating ideal conditions for the proliferation of pests and diseases, being unsightly and thereby a handicap for the tourism sector, and creating blockages in storm-water drains that lead to unnecessary flooding as well as contamination of water sources: the spokesman declared that such incontrovertible evidence dictated the need for immediate action.

He then challenged each individual Liswati to participate in reversing the country's fortunes, beginning with behavioural change born of recognising that littering is an environmental crime. The speech encouraged all municipalities and towns to initiate measures for waste separation at source, calling the latter a service that is overdue and preventing hundreds of Emaswati from playing their part in waste minimisation. Then came

government's declaration that cleaning up the country is a "National Exercise", and for that reason it was further announcing that the last Saturday of every month - from 8:00 to 10:00 - would henceforth be designated a national clean-up time. Under this regime, Emaswati were expected to clean their spaces, all public areas, the surroundings of their places of work, religious, educational, recreational, residential premises, vending sites, car parks and road servitudes.

It was said that cooperation and collaboration would be essential: companies should invest in their surrounding communities, while community members should dedicate their time and energy to making their environment clean. It was also the reason for addressing the campaign directly to municipalities and traditional leaders, who should be champions of the exercise and agents of change, mobilising their communities and wards, and leading by example. Government thanked the companies which had already pledged to support the initiative, and challenged more companies, institutions and organizations to follow suit and thereby ensure its sustainability. By protecting the kingdom's environment and keeping it clean, the statement continued, remarkable strides can be made towards realising the objectives of the country's Strategic Roadmap economic recovery plan, as a clean environment protects agricultural produce and boosts tourism, both key sectors identified by said Roadmap. Furthermore, the campaign also provides the necessary impetus for businesses to thrive and spread to new ventures, thus boosting infrastructure investment and innovation as part of government's priority themes.

In this vein, the spokesman stated that the economic value and contribution of the waste sector have been largely under-utilised, with only a minimum percentage of waste recycled domestically and therefore not delivering potential rewards such as jobs and improved quality of lives. With a growing population, he continued, municipalities will soon run out of space for waste disposal and thus making it crucial that Emaswati devise innovative ways of re-using, recycling and recovering waste, and up-cycling it to increase its value. Government's Strategic Roadmap focuses on, among other

priorities, facilitating a vibrant private sector that will stimulate economic growth and recovery, creating an opportunity for businesses to tap into the waste management space to generate value products and jobs: among the key growth sectors identified by the Strategic Roadmap are Education and ICT, Mining and Energy. Some of the waste that is littering the country can be converted into energy through technology and innovation. Industries have a role to play by exploiting what government called "low hanging fruits", such as waste streams that could easily be upcycled to high-value goods such as car tyres.

The spokesman concluded by also launching the Eswatini Ribbon: he described it as symbolising recognition of the Clean Eswatini Campaign, the country's commitment to cleaning and greening its environment, and the partnership and collaboration towards a litter-free country. Companies that support the initiative, either financially or with cleaning material, will be recognised or awarded with the Clean Eswatini Token. "Government is therefore issuing a challenge to all companies to rise and be counted, and we will soon have Clean Eswatini Champions. To all of you gathered here today, by honouring this invitation to attend this launch you have already demonstrated your commitment to cleaning and greening the country. All of you are now therefore friends of the Clean Eswatini Campaign."

## ESWATINI ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY (EEA)

Its mission is to ensure that the kingdom's development is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable by means of promoting sound environmental policies, practices and development which meet appropriate national and international standards. The main objective of EEA is to ensure that Eswatini's environment is treated in a proper way now and in the future. "Environment" means, without being limited to, the atmosphere, water in all its forms, land, soil and subsoil, flora, fauna, energy sources, mineral, topographical formations with energy potential, geothermal resources, living resources, landscape resources and other elements, along with factors such as residues, garbage, waste and refuse, noise, living conditions in human settlements, and man-made products.



# AGRICULTURE

*The importance with which government views this sector is evinced by its status as one of the five pillars of the kingdom's National Development Plan (NDP) to 2022 and accompanying Strategic Roadmap. Subtitled 'Towards Economic Recovery', the two-pronged initiative is said to be the culmination of extensive research and consultations on feasible quick-wins combined with long-term goals, the latter directed by the King's pronouncement which is known as Vision 2022. Much now hinges upon "the new range of measures that have the most potential to kick-start the journey to economic revival and inclusive, sustainable growth, along with creating a conducive environment for a vibrant private sector that is export-oriented and employment-creating".*

As regards agriculture, the NDP lists as sectoral Key Achievements, Strengths and Opportunities:

- **Sugarcane:** The sugar industry continues to be a key contributor to agricultural output and the economy at large through its backward and forward linkages to other sectors. A total of

9 000 new ha of irrigated land has been developed and put under sugarcane production.

- **Maize:** An input-subsidy programme was introduced in 2015 with the aim of improving the competitiveness of agriculture production. With the exception of the drought years, maize

production has increased to almost 100 000 tonnes per annum. Nevertheless, this does not yet meet domestic consumption requirements, and a study has not yet been done to assess the impact of the subsidy.

- **High-Value Crops:** A number of new, high-value-added crops are being explored, including horticulture, vegetables, cotton variants and new fruits. Some of these are already experiencing success in trials and in informal markets. The regulatory framework is being developed for these, and support to meet export standards is being put in place.
- **Livestock:** Pig, poultry and dairy livestock are all undergoing positive developments, with increased pig-breeding capacity, broiler and table-eggs successfully exported to the regional market, and large investments underway in the dairy industry.
- **Irrigation Projects:** Government has invested heavily in irrigation in the form of small earth-dams as well as large dams for agricultural irrigation smallholder schemes. Projects such as LUSIP I and II are enhancing the irrigation coverage in Eswatini and increasing the country's resilience to drought.

## KEY CHALLENGES, WEAKNESSES AND THREATS:

- **Climate Change:** The frequency and intensity of droughts appear to be increasing, and the country has limited climate-change resiliency and mitigation mechanisms. The agricultural sector is greatly affected by droughts, with livestock and crops under Swati Nation Land (SNL) being particularly exposed. The sector contracted by 11.4 percent cumulatively as a result of the previous drought. To exacerbate matters, there is no insurance coverage against any disaster, unlike in other SADC countries that have invested in such.
- **Maize:** The country has never been able to produce enough to feed itself, and has always relied on imports to meet its consumption requirements. Local maize produce is less price-competitive than imported grains, and local production makes up just 70 percent of the

national requirement, despite it being the staple food. Furthermore, lack of coordination and other inefficiencies associated with the rollout of the input-subsidy programme have reduced its potential impact.

- **Inflation:** High food-inflation has reduced access to food for many families, especially as they depend on purchases to meet their food requirements. The inflation is further exacerbated by the effects of drought and the reliance on imported food. Increasing production costs, particularly electricity and water, are reducing margins and pushing out small producers.
- **Land Utilisation:** There is a sizeable amount of unused or underutilised arable land, including large hectares held by government as idle farms. For those in the hands of their owners, most are lying idle and held for speculation as land prices rise significantly. The legislative framework for land procurement often limits commercialisation. Furthermore, land issues are the responsibility of various Ministries, making it difficult to reach consensus decisions.

## RESPONSE STRATEGY:

- Diversify product-base by developing agro-processing strengths and value-chains
- Improve irrigation and water supply facilities and prioritise dams on the list of planned large infrastructure projects
- Identify and fully explore a range of potential new agricultural and horticulture crops and potential agro-processing products to prioritise
- Take full advantage of new trade deals to boost current product-base
- Develop an integrated land-use plan
- Promote investment directed towards processing of local raw materials into finished products in the value-chain
- Support cross-border linkages into regional and global value-chains
- Promote movement from subsistence farming to commercial farming, including the enactment of the SNL Commercialisation Bill

- Ensure appropriateness of current legislation to allow current opportunities to be harnessed
- Strengthen livestock breeding and improvement programme
- Review existing Single-Industry Borrower Limit regulations to enable more credit to enter the agriculture sector

## MINISTERIAL THINK-TANKS

Cabinet and Principal Secretaries regularly convene to review the Strategic Roadmap, this to ensure that all development plans are geared towards addressing the specific growth pillars of the NDP. In a recent joint statement, an assurance was given that in 2022 and beyond, agriculture would remain a key priority for sustained economic growth in the kingdom, and that an emphasis would be placed on the adoption of smart and modernised agriculture in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. An example of the latter is the prototype drip-irrigation-tunnel project which is sited in the area around King Mswati III (KMIII) International Airport and which aims to increase the production of export-destined vegetables. Government's drive to propel business growth and job creation also includes boosting milk production for self-sufficiency and export purposes: construction of a milk processing plant has been completed and an operator engaged, which has triggered other local milk producing companies to expand their facilities. Dairy-based enterprises are expected to create 5 000 jobs at full implementation.

## STRATEGIC ROADMAP

When the Minister of Agriculture, Jabulani Mabuza, unpacked the Strategic Roadmap to media representatives, he highlighted government's belief that the time had come for Eswatini to commercialise agriculture. He noted that the sector currently contributed nine percent to GDP, and that the target was to increase it to 15 percent within the next five years. Mabuza pointed out that the same applied to employment opportunities generated - currently nine percent of the workforce, to be increased to 15 percent - then added that in order to achieve said percentages, the country would have to build enough dams to irrigate as much as 30 000 hectares of new farmland. That figure included completion of the Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project Phase II,

he said, and after which it will develop the Mkhondvo-Ngwavuma Dam and also construct 20 or more small- and medium-size dams across the country.

Mabuza said that he also wished to see improved service delivery of the inputs subsidy and tractor hire services, which would lead to increased production of maize, legumes and sorghum, resulting in a greater likelihood of attaining food security. He declared that further enhancement of output could be realised through ensuring optimum production on both government-owned and private-sector farms, saying that the country must increase agricultural exports and value-add activities by placing a determined focus on daily production and agro-processing. The Ministry of Agriculture's planned outcomes from the NDP/Strategic Roadmap include:

- Further optimise the export-oriented production and marketing of baby vegetable as currently under way in the tunnel-project near KMIII International Airport
- Upscale the facilitation of private sector investment in the tunnel-based programme to encompass all four regions of the country
- Promote beef production and processing in order to increase annual output from its current 11 000 tonnes to about 16 000 tonnes
- Similarly with goat production, increase annual output from its current 16.25 tonnes to a significantly greater 2 500 tonnes
- Increase milk production from 18 million to 100 million litres and thereby attain self-sufficiency with surplus for export

## PURSE-HOLDER

When the Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture a total of E1.6-billion "to ensure adequate service delivery for crop and livestock services, agricultural research, water harvesting and irrigation development, as well as commercialisation of the sector", he also told Parliament and the nation that government "continues to prioritise the agriculture sector for investment in order to spur economic growth and overall acceleration of national development". Rijkenberg pointed out that the projects and programmes attracting government budget in this

sector were aimed at addressing food insecurity and rural poverty, then extended thanks to the kingdom's cooperating partners for their continued support in this sphere of activity. Specific undertakings and their allocations:

- Towards completion of the Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project Phase II (Downstream Development) E745.1-million
- High Value Crops Project E191.9-million
- Livestock Development Project E30.9-million
- Construction of the Mkhondvo-Ngwavuma Dam E83.8-million
- Construction of small and medium dams E83.7-million
- Feasibility study for proposed Nondvo Dam E22-million

## SITUATION REPORT

Minister Rijkenberg pointed out that agriculture has in the quest to build its resilience and improve production received a great deal of assistance from the kingdom's development partners: he said that several measures were being implemented in response to climate change, and emphasised that these initiatives would be ongoing in order to enhance production. Continuing, the Minister reported that a number of coordinated programmes, including the High Value Crop and Horticulture project, the Fruit Tree project and the Smallholder Market-Led project, have begun to generate significant output for farmers. The latter have received support while diversifying their production activities away from the traditional sugarcane and maize to horticulture and small stock, resulting in a marked increase in local production of vegetables in particular.

## GOVERNMENT ARM

The Ministry of Agriculture's obligation is to ensure household food security and increased sustainable agricultural productivity through diversification and enhancement of commercial agricultural activities. The Ministry is also responsible for the development and promotion of appropriate technologies and efficient extension services, while ensuring stakeholder participation and sustainable

development and management of natural resources.

## PARASTATAL ACTIONS

The kingdom's National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) hosted the inaugural Cold Chain Summit Eswatini at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre in Manzini. The undertaking was said to be in line with the government-issued mandate to grow and expand agribusiness through initiating and maintaining a Cold Chain, Logistics and Produce Handling Programme. Themed 'Keeping It Fresh', the Summit was staged in collaboration with the Southern Africa Chapter of the Produce Market Association of which NAMBoard is an affiliate member and whose mission is to connect, inform and deliver industry solutions to enhance members' prosperity. The first-of-its-kind such event in the region was described as a resounding success that has set the path and tone for agriculture commercialisation on the domestic front.

Cold Chain Summit Eswatini attracted more than 700 local, regional and continental delegates: it featured 34 representatives of various value chain industries - including some of the largest producers and marketers from the SA region - along with 26 exhibitors from across the cold chain technology and services sector, banks and non-bank financial institutions, local and regional media, as well as both export-ready and smallholder farmers from across Eswatini and the SADC region. The Summit specifically sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Kick-start the process of alliances, networks and knowledge required to commercialise agriculture in Eswatini
- Build and maintain an uninterrupted end-end cold chain management system within the country's fresh produce markets, farming units, handling facilities and retail sector by connecting stakeholders across the agriculture value chain including farmers, input suppliers, academia, cutting-edge technology leaders, cold chain management system providers, cold chain transport providers, exporters, fresh produce market agents and retailers
- Capacitate local farmers with the necessary knowledge, equipment and agents to arrest high

rates of post-harvest losses and extend product shelf-life of various value chains including beef, small livestock, dairy and field produce

The Summit was structured around these three Pillars:

- **FARM INPUTS:** Sustainable Farm inputs • Biological seed, chemicals and soil enhancers • Proper seed and seedling production • Inputs supply chain and opportunities • allowable inputs in exports
- **PRODUCTION SYSTEMS:** Mechanisation • Genetic modification • Greenhouse production • Biological management • Climate smart focused production • Farming with nature
- **POST-HARVEST TECHNOLOGIES:** Harvesting and harvest management • Transportation by land, sea and air • Standards and accreditation • Logistics control and calculations • Processing • Refrigeration

NAMBoard's report-back declared that over the course of the two days, rich knowledge was ingrained, farmers were exposed to new ideas, technologies and relevant tools for cold chain management, valuable relationships and networks were forged, and there was exposure to the great value that can be gleaned from maintaining an effective Cold Chain, Logistics and Produce Handling Programme. According to the organization, it also became apparent that much remains to be done to attain the higher goal of an improved national economy fed by a vibrant agro-processing industry that itself is a result of the application of effective cold management systems in local agribusinesses. The delivery of industry-relevant research papers, exhibitions of cutting-edge technology, pre-arranged sessions and site excursions, exposure to local, regional and global market opportunities, all combined to create a best-case approach that left the majority of delegates, speakers and sponsors expressing very positive sentiments about the event.

Under the heading 'Summit Benefits to the National Economy and Value-Chains Enhancement', NAMBoard summed up thus:

- Skills-building has been identified within the Economic Roadmap and Strategy as key for the industry to forge ahead and achieve set growth

targets. Skills in Cold Chain Management are highly specialised and difficult to source. The Summit provided these skills in the shortest possible time and in the most cost-effective manner, as all industry players were available in one centre.

- The sharing of inspiration and lessons from experience is important in kick-starting commercialisation and attaining the level of production, logistics and marketing that the country has set as standards. The presentations by leading farm groups and producers at the Summit contributed to making the latter a reality. The speakers also interacted with farmers from all levels, enhancing the motivation.
- Deal making and business enhancement: The Summit connected farmers with key value chain stakeholders such as financiers: it is expected that by the end of the year, at least E20-million will be committed by the various financial institutions towards growing small to large-scale businesses. Major deals already in progress include the King Mswati III Airport Agribusiness

Hub where two more financiers and investors have come on board.

- Major industry partners that include ZZ2, RSA Group, Fruit Farm Group and Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market made commitments to start due diligence and value chain identification within the next two months.
- With over 200 participants from outside the country, the event injected income into the local economy. It is planned that in future summits, synchronisation with the tourism sector will be achieved so that maximum value is derived.

The Prime Minister asserted during his keynote address that the summit came at the most opportune time, with agriculture deemed one of the fundamental vehicles to revive the country's economy: for this reason, he said, government considered the event to be of great significance and pivotal in stimulating the objectives of the Strategic Roadmap towards ensuring that the country attains Vision 2022. He described the two-day programme as "a clear demonstration that when we get agricultural processes right, benefits will accrue to

a myriad industries and, by extension, communities and towns as the country witnesses renewed economic activity".

The PM added said that government's aim was to generate over 20 000 jobs in this sector within the next three years through downstream activities such as LUSIP and the Earth Dams project which, collectively, shall bring more than 4 500 ha under irrigation for commercial production of non-sugar crops. He spoke of how the dairy industry aims to increase annual milk production beyond the 100 000-litres mark, and how growth is expected in other fresh products such as beef, fish and fruits. He concluded his remarks by encouraging farmers to follow best cold chain management practices and standards in all operations in order to attain a good shelf life for their produce and successfully penetrate export markets, ensuring sustainability and a reliable income.

#### ESWATINI DAIRY BOARD (EDB)

The entity has in place a Dairy Industry Development Strategy to 2024, which aims to improve the subsector through effective and relevant production and management systems, human resources development and dairy marketing/promotion.

- **Dairy Industry Structure Reform:** Involves the introduction of new and influential players who can bring about effective economic change and industry dynamics. This strategy involves the establishment of large dairy farms which can boost production volumes and quality and further attract investments into manufacturing and processing. Large-volume milk production is central to evolving the industry into import substitution and export promotion. The establishment of other small, medium and large processing plants is also key in changing the dynamics of the industry.
- **Farm Production System:** Eswatini's dairy industry is focusing on investing in increasing adoption of existing beneficial dairy technologies and developing new techniques to increase productivity and production from forage, potential feed-conversion efficiency, cow-functionality and resource-use efficiency. The industry is also focusing on conducting farm

research to analyse and address challenges relating to farm health, management and farm profitability. The implementation of business- and production-targeted extension services is also key in enterprise development. Effective dairying is achieved through creating industry networks and building capability in all parts of the industry. Finally, effective communication needs to be in place between government and dairy farms and other stakeholders in the value chain in order to test the effectiveness of government policy initiatives.

- **Farm Management Systems Strategy:** Ensuring that farm managers have the business skills to identify their goals and implement their plans could enhance dairy farm management. Farm managers' capabilities could be improved through appropriate education, research, on-farm training, establishing high-quality information sources and ensuring that dairy businesses have access to improved methods and tools that could support farm management. To ensure capacity building, develop a graduate trainee programme in collaboration with dairy farms and processors and furthermore collaborate with youth agencies and Tinkhundla Centres in empowering young people in dairy entrepreneurship skills.
- **Dairy Industry Marketing/Promotion:** This strategy is mainly focused on increasing the range of products manufactured locally which may include UHT, cheese, ice cream, butter, powdered milk and others. This can be done through attracting investments and promoting dairy processing in the industry and providing a business model that is focused on trade issues and the needs of the two ends of the value chain, namely the consumer and the farmer. Other strategies include the formation of a stakeholder task team which will be focused on promoting dairy throughout the broader community to develop goodwill and awareness about the benefits of dairy. Create a dairy-promotion forum to facilitate dairy seminars and presentation of dairy research papers to stakeholders. Promote campaigns throughout the value chain that will create awareness about the benefits of dairy.

- **Attracting Talent to the Dairy Sector:** The industry will promote dairy careers to school leavers, tertiary students and early career-change individuals through ensuring that people in the industry are fully informed of career and business opportunities in dairy, and know how to access these opportunities. Also, it is important to promote the schools' dairy projects and school feeding programmes to ensure that pupils learn about dairy and its benefits while at school. On-farm innovations are encouraged to improve the work environment. In addition, dairy people's careers could be developed through ensuring that high-quality training services, leadership programmes and mentoring or coaching programmes are in place.
- **Government Regulations/Strategies:** In terms of regulations, relevant government departments and agencies should ensure that all plans and policies relating to land use, resource availability, animal health issues, trade and quality control, economic and social principles are developed to create an enabling environment for the industry, rather than to frustrate plans and operations. Benchmarks and targets for increasing resource efficiency and guiding good practice by stakeholders should be established. This goal seeks to ensure that Eswatini's dairy industry is progressive across all segments of the supply chain, including the harmonisation of all dairy import and export permits (one-stop shop) for ease and efficiency. This goal also focuses on smooth operations and engagement with stakeholders for the industry to thrive: it is important that the above is achieved through involving, working and negotiating with dairy stakeholders to develop regulations that will maximise the effectiveness of the industry performance rather than hinder such practices.

## PANORAMIC VISION

**Royal Eswatini Sugar (RES) Corporation** in its most recent Integrated Report declared: "Our strategy is a key part of our intellectual capital. The year under review was the first in our five-year Simama strategic growth plan to 2025 which aims to increase capacity in the factories, increase the area under cane and diversify our product portfolio. Part of the plan

includes an efficiency drive in the mills, distillery and support functions. Despite the many challenges, we have made progress on a number of fronts.

"RES's strategic aspiration speaks to a continued cost control consciousness that will drive employee behaviours over the next five years and reduce the unit cost of producing one tonne of sugar by 20 percent by 2025. Our strategy is supported by three distinct themes that guide management in selecting strategic initiatives. These are, firstly, cost optimisation through efficient, cost effective and innovative production of agricultural products using soil as our base asset. Secondly, we are pursuing new products and markets. Thirdly, we aim to enhance our organizational culture based on strong motivation and innovation as we hold each other accountable to exceed individual and organizational goals.

"Our strategic programme includes Simunye centrifugal upgrade, Simunye B continuous pan, upgrade Simunye A evaporators, overall energy efficiency, accelerated conversion to drip irrigation, land and factory expansion, and distillery upgrade. New products and markets to be investigated include an alcohol bottling plant, anhydrous alcohol plant, ethyl acetate plant, polylactic acid plant and opportunistic crops. To achieve our organizational culture objectives, initiatives will include business process improvements, enhancing management capability,

increasing our use of value-add technology and encouraging high performance at both team and individual levels. Our ongoing horizontal growth projects include new cane lands under drip irrigation and bulk water infrastructure, expansion of capacity at both mills, and the upgrade of D1 plant in the distillery to the same specification as the modern D2 plant.

"Through the IYSIS acquisition, we secured the leases on new land for cane production and we improved water storage. In addition, we increased capacity for CMS and molasses storage. We also continued to research becoming self-sufficient in energy, which was a key priority of our previous strategic plan. We finalised a SAP project in the mills and distillery to ensure accurate reporting in order to

aid decision-making and planning. This will allow us to track our performance against strategic plans. Our attempts to secure certification for food safety for the mills have not yet been successful, but will continue in the new financial year as we work with the Eswatini Sugar Association and their consultants. At Simunye, a mud filter project was postponed as consultants from outside the county were unable to travel due to lock-down restrictions.

"Our two major priorities centre around productivity and efficiency, but we have also started to pursue product diversification to dilute our long term reliance on the sugar industry. Biodegradable plastics, growing new crops and the production of gin, vodka and rum in the distillery were considered, and feasibility studies will be conducted over the next two years. Now that the revised Petroleum Bill allows for fuel blending, we can take advantage of the changed legislation to pursue opportunities in this area.

"There is much to be done to achieve our objectives by 2025, including ensuring that we consult and cooperate with our Outgrowers. In order to succeed, we need to increase our use of value added technology and reshape our organizational culture through skills enhancement, a consolidated in-house research and development capability, and the practice of a high performance culture. We will also need to develop the required marketing skills for a diverse range of new products."

## D-DATE 2022

Local timber giant, Montigny Investments Limited (Montigny), committed itself to a target of having created 12 500 jobs by 2022: CEO Andrew le Roux made the undertaking when addressing His Majesty King Mswati III during an annual Shiselweni Business Dinner. Montigny was founded in 1997, and is today the 100 percent Swati-owned and operated, largest integrated timber company of its kind in Southern Africa. According to le Roux, its workforce during the interim grew to 6 700 by 2016, then to 11 600 by 2019: he said that in line with the country's Vision 2022 and NDP/Strategic Roadmap to 2022, Montigny then aimed to create an additional 900 jobs, most if not all of which in rural areas that customarily offer few employment opportunities.



# COMMUNICATIONS

***The importance of this sector to Eswatini's growth trajectory is echoed time and again at the highest levels. His Majesty King Mswati III declared that the nation "cannot afford to be left behind", and a Cabinet statement deemed ICT-adoption and the promoting of technology-integration "crucial going forward". For the 2022/23 fiscal year, government allocated E360.7-million to the Ministry of ICT which is tasked with "improving the performance of this fast-developing sector" and harness the benefits of the digital economy.***

Internet connectivity has been rolled out to well over a hundred peri-urban and rural secondary and high schools, more than a dozen Tinkhundla centres and scores of health facilities. Government has also initiated a 'One Laptop Per Child' project that will see earmarked rural schools each receive 45 devices.

The King expressed his wish that through the availability of high-quality, reliable and affordable technologies, the country should endeavour to derive the full benefits thereof in order to become an informed society. His Majesty gave an assurance that government will continue the process of providing free Wi-Fi hotspots in strategic public places such as schools, Tinkhundla centres and points of entry into the kingdom.

The Finance Minister disclosed in his 2022/23 Budget Speech that government had amalgamated its Computer Services department with the Royal Science and Technology Park, which will promote the availability of all ICT resources centrally, minimise duplication, eliminate working in silos, and ensure that e-Government initiatives are fast-tracked. He also revealed that a price-benchmarking study - undertaken through the ESCCOM - established that wholesale prices of internet and leased lines in Eswatini are significantly higher than comparative competitive markets in the Southern African Development Community. A directive was consequently issued to Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation to reduce wholesale prices for leased lines and internet.

## HIGH-SPEED COMMUNICATION

The cost of facilitating fixed-broadband coverage in the country had been estimated at E20-million for each of the initiative's five component financial years. This project is according to the Strategic Plan aimed at ensuring top quality yet affordable broadband infrastructure to thus-far underserved areas. Sub-projects are deemed to include extending the fibre network, extending the overall network coverage to encompass all government facilities, and establishing Wi-Fi hotspots in much-frequented locales.

The Ministry's objective is to establish progressive policies and usher in a thriving ICT industry that can catapult the country's economic growth and job creation initiatives to greater heights.

With affordable and reliable broadband services close at hand, government can more readily advance its policies of decentralisation, education and health for all, while small enterprises in all communities will enjoy access to markets and suppliers countrywide and further afield.

## ESCCOM

The key to quicker and less costly communications systems is integrated development, and with infrastructure-sharing regulations for the ICT industry already in place, ESCCOM is encouraging operators to make good use of the opportunities, as they reduce infrastructure costs and benefit consumers in the long run. ESCCOM is responsible for regulating Eswatini's communications sector consisting of telecommunication services and networks, broadcasting services, postal services and the use and allocation of radio spectrum.

Transparency, honesty, excellence, innovation and social responsibility are the declared values of Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, the component structures of which include:

**EswatiniTelecom** provides a spectrum of quality, global telecommunication services, with direct dialling to over 200 countries and a 24-hour operator-assisted service. It offers ADSL Broadband, which is a high-speed, 'always on' internet-access service to send and receive data at speeds surpassing conventional dial-up connection. It also delivers high-performance at low cost, and is suitable for small to medium companies, as well as home use.

EswatiniTelecom is committed to supplying modern telecommunication services throughout the country,

including less-developed areas, and contributes to the economy by providing employment, attachment for students at tertiary institutions, and by participating in and sponsoring social events. The Next Generation Network is poised to change the local communications landscape by bringing on stream certain products and services that are currently not available.

**Eswatini.net** is EswatiniTelecom's Internet Service Provider and offers customers integrated internet solutions under one roof: it puts forward a variety of internet services tailored to fit the needs of individual customers. Eswatini.net also offers Web Hosting: the customer is provided with an account wherewith to manage their site. Complementing the latter - and for email routing - is a Domain Name Hosting service.

**EswatiniPost** is the country's prime mover of written communications and parcels, with services comprising ordinary and registered mail, courier and freight moving. The Post Office provides the most cost-effective delivery option and serves remote and rural areas, and has through computerisation introduced Mail-Room Management and Post Direct, as well as banking and hybrid mail services.

The country has two cellular-telecommunication service providers, namely **MTN Eswatini** and **Eswatini Mobile**. Both continue to invest millions of Emalangeni in expanding their infrastructure to offer as comprehensive and extensive an area of network coverage as possible, and regularly announce the availability of the very latest innovations in both phones/devices and the communication technology that powers them.

**Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services** - is responsible for disseminating news and information which is aimed at educating, informing and entertaining Emaswati effectively and impartially for the purposes of development and social welfare.

**Eswatini Television Authority** broadcasts are of a high picture-quality and accessible to the entire nation via 100 percent satellite-transmission coverage. At last count, Eswatini has six authorised operators offering access to technology that enables fast, cost-effective data communications from remote sites.

**Newspapers** in both English and SiSwati and with online versions boast wide circulation figures.



# ENERGY

*Identified in the kingdom's National Development Plan and Strategic Roadmap as a potential pillar of sustainable economic growth, this sector features prominently in key speeches. The Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Peter Bhembe, said that government was looking at energy as one of the main areas towards which development-agendas should be directed. He highlighted the pivotal issue of Eswatini striving to attain energy self-sufficiency and then becoming an exporter of surplus. Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg emphasised that government continues to create an enabling environment for investment in the energy sector: furthermore, it continues - in partnership with key stakeholders - to explore the viability of establishing more power plants locally by utilising a mix of the country's fossil and renewable resources.*

With the kingdom seeking greater industrialisation for adding value to primary-sector output and enhancing its appeal to potential investors, energy – electricity in particular – is of paramount importance. The challenges in this regard are delineated in the Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) Strategic Plan(SP), while the root cause is summarised in the preamble: "Eswatini imports 70 percent of its electricity needs from South Africa and Mozambique." That fact, according to ESERA, "defines key areas in the SP which is largely focused on three main issues which in turn pinpoint at least five primary objectives and performance indicators for the planning period". Eswatini's electricity industry is in the SP identified by:

- Over-reliance on imported electricity. The supply of electricity to local consumers by Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) is predominantly sourced from South Africa's Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) and Electridade de Mozambique (EDM), thus the security of supply is at risk: ESKOM has in recent years increasingly struggled to meet its domestic obligations, and as a result resorts to power-rationing which extends to Eswatini. Furthermore, the supply-agreement between South Africa and Eswatini is expected to run out in 2022. EDM provides the kingdom with relatively small quantities of electricity.
- Cross-subsidisation between customers. Electricity tariffs are not cost-reflective in most Southern African Development Community countries, Eswatini included.
- Emergence of Distributed Generated technologies. The cost of small-size generation plants in both conventional and renewable energy technologies has significantly declined and is now comparable to the conventional, centralised model. If the supply-cost of electricity from the grid continues to increase steeply, energy-intensive users may begin to prefer to generate their own electricity. This deflection from the grid would lead to fewer customers paying for the electricity system, thus increasing tariffs for remaining customers.

Based on the three key issues facing the Eswatini Electricity Supply Industry, ESERA identified the

following strategic objectives and key performance indicators:

- To effectively and efficiently regulate the Electricity Supply Industry
  - Approve tariff-review and finance-licence applications
  - Review audit and monitoring reports (quality of supply/service)
  - Review, monitor and enforce grid-code compliance
  - Resolve customer-complaints against licences
- To increase stakeholder/public engagements and consumer awareness
  - Conduct a stakeholder-perception survey
  - Carry out a corporate-image index
  - Develop a corporate communication strategy for internal/external stakeholders
- To introduce efficient, cost-reflective tariffs while facilitating electricity access for indigent households and off-grid supply
  - Develop a cost-reflective tariff-migration strategy
  - Develop a tariff-support mechanism for electricity access for poor and indigent households as cost-reflective tariffs are implemented
  - Develop a regulatory framework for mini-grids and off-grid solutions
- To create and support a conducive regulatory framework to liberalise the Electricity Supply Industry
  - Conduct a market study on the economic impact of the proposed non-exclusive central buyer model defining small, medium and large Independent Power Producers as well as contestable customers
  - Review tariff-methodology to include Gx Tx Dx tariff calculations
  - Develop guidelines for ring-fencing
  - Develop metered framework for embedded generation
  - Establish procurement units
  - Report on the protected end-user electricity path based on the Integrated Resource Plan or the Procurement Plan

- To create a High-Performance Organizational (HPO) culture, the achievement of which shall see ESERA boast highly-engaged staff who are results-oriented
  - HPO Human Resources Framework
  - Revised individual-performance contracts
  - Engagements with Public Enterprise Unit on reclassification of ESERA

Conclusion: "In view of the set-out priorities and plans, ESERA is determined to implement its Strategic Plan successfully, this in line with its mission to promote a viable and sustainable energy industry in Eswatini through effective regulation. An organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage."

### RENEWABLES OUTLOOK

His Majesty King Mswati III told the United Nations Climate Action Summit that Eswatini will need more than US\$150-million to roll out its Renewable Energy Long-Term Strategic Plan. The kingdom was one of a few countries selected to deliver a presentation on their climate-based action programmes, under the theme: 'A race we can win, a race we must win'. With regard to the topic, 'Cutting greenhouse-gas emissions now with cooling and energy-efficiency', His Majesty was reported as stating that Eswatini had developed national energy strategic plans for proper and adequate development of its renewable capacity, and that "by 2030, we envisage more than 90 percent of our population having access to electricity through vigorous renewable-energy generation systems".

He told the gathering that Eswatini had increased electricity-access for the rural population to beyond the 70 percent mark, and that the kingdom plans to elevate its renewable-energy production to "acceptable levels of its mix" within the coming decade. The monarch declared that this development trajectory would be coupled with an increase in efficient systems to ensure total access for all citizens. He detailed how almost 25 percent of Eswatini's energy requirements are met by domestic hydropower-generation, which is highly impacted by climate change, and how the country therefore wishes to strengthen its ability "to harness energy

from the sun, with appropriate support for capacity-building and technology". His Majesty added that the private sector was playing its part in emission-reduction by adopting a new approach through solely using natural components that have zero global warming and no ozone-depleting potential.

### EXPORT-ORIENTED

A new foreign direct investor is the Australia-based, independent power producer (IPP) and renewable energy storage operator, Frazium Energy (Pty) Ltd, whose Robert Frazer was introduced to dignitaries, stakeholders and the media at an event hosted by the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA). To paraphrase Frazium Energy's official profile:

- Large-scale Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System IPP focused on developing, owning and operating renewable energy projects globally: investment appetite includes developing countries
- Primary interest lies in projects that are able to combine Solar PV and battery energy storage
- Primary target is to focus on utility-scale Solar PV projects that are able to be combined with large-scale battery energy storage systems, so is constantly on the lookout for combined solar with storage opportunities worldwide
- Preference for flow batteries due to their longevity, positive environmental attributes and overall competitive levelized cost of energy, which is a measure of a power source that allows comparison of different methods of electricity generation on a consistent basis, and can also be regarded as the minimum constant price at which electricity must be sold in order to break even over the lifetime of a project
- Active throughout the entire process, from opportunity identification and validation, solution design, obtaining approvals and licences, building and operating
- Seeks to add value to renewables by the incorporation of storage, thereby enabling them to become a viable alternative to fossil fuel baseload or peaker generation

- Projects are designed to maximise the use of renewable energy for baseload reliability, energy utilisation, smoothing and peak shaving

It was said at the launch that Frazium Energy's presence in Eswatini – on 50 ha of Swati Nation Land at Edwaleni – will create over 100 new employment opportunities and, during phase one alone, inject an estimated E1.5-billion into the local economy. The primary site will reportedly comprise a 25 Megawatts (MW) Solar Farm, a 25-50MW/100MWh Vanadium Redox Flow Battery Farm, and a plant capable of manufacturing 10 million litres of electrolyte per annum. Robert Frazer disclosed that South Africa's ESKOM and the Southern African Power Pool are intended purchasers of the output: no mention was made of what part it will play in the kingdom's electricity scenario.

The Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, disclosed at the launch that landing Frazium Energy was the culmination of a year-long series of engagements involving his departments, EIPA and the German Chamber of Commerce. He described said engagements as "part of government's aggressive approach to luring investors who fall within the targeted sectors as outlined in the Strategic Roadmap to 2022...I'm excited that EIPA has been able to migrate an investment interest into a concrete project". Minister Khumalo concluded by requesting the necessary support from all government entities and regulatory bodies to afford the project the means it requires to succeed. EIPA CEO, Sibani Mngomezulu, in a brief address celebrated the partnerships that gave birth to the project.

Robert Frazer highlighted that Eswatini's strategic geographical location will make it easy to access the large and growing Southern African electricity market, and the kingdom is therefore the ideal destination for his company's project. He singled out the close proximity of Mpumalanga's raw materials, as well as the harbours in Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal. Also of great importance, he said, is that the country's political environment remains stable, as evidenced by "the Australian government giving Eswatini the same safety rating as Germany". Frazer concluded his remarks by suggesting that when

phase two of the investment is implemented, the project's total value to Eswatini could escalate to as much as E7-billion.

### THE SPECTRUM

Short, medium and long-term initiatives name-checked by government:

- ESERA has launched a competitive-bidding procurement process for a 40MW Solar PV power plant, and identified qualified bidders
- Civil works for the construction of EEC's 10MW Lavumisa Solar PV plant have commenced, and the plant is due to be commissioned
- Construction of the 13MW Lower Maguduza Hydropower plant is expected to be complete by 2022
- At the Lower Edwaleni Power Station, an additional +/- 13MW Hydropower plant is under consideration
- Similarly, an unspecified downstream addition to the Maguga Dam Hydropower plant is being considered
- 40MW from biomass. No details of the variant or source/s were given, but commentators pointed out that bagasse and wood-fibre are in the most plentiful supply: Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation and Ubombo Sugar Ltd both power their factories with bagasse-fired turbines, while Montigny Investments Ltd – which annually processes about a million tonnes of timber – said in 2014 when purchasing Usuthu Forest Products from SAPPi that it might convert part of the latter's redundant pulp-mill site into an electricity-generating plant
- Wind-power: even less information was forthcoming, but ESERA has mapped out the kingdom's wind-corridors
- 300MW through fossil-fuels. Eswatini's long held vision of a power station substantial enough to meet present-day and future domestic demand, and fired by coal from its own deposits, was during the recent crippling drought once again brought to the fore, especially when all domestic hydropower plants ceased operating and the demand for imported electricity spiked well above the customary 70 percent: the

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projected cost of such a massive undertaking has thus far proved to be prohibitive

## FACT-FINDING

When the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy Parliamentary Portfolio Committee toured energy projects in the southern part of the country, the party of legislators, which was led by Senator Princess Ntfombiyenkhusi who is also Chairperson, was hosted by the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Senator Peter Bhembe, alongside senior ministerial officials including Principal Secretary Winnie Stewart, as well as EEC executive managers. The Portfolio Committee began its fact-finding mission by visiting the Phuzumoya Strategic Fuel Reserve Facility Site. Here, Minister Bhembe stated that plans for securing funding were at an advanced stage and if all went well, the project might commence “in the not-too-distant future”. (This undertaking is detailed in the paragraphs that follow.)

The Portfolio Committee then proceeded to tour the vast Ncandweni Substation, where project Managing Director Meshack Kunene explained that the under-construction facility, once completed, will improve and strengthen the electricity output for Ncandweni and surrounding areas and see sugarcane farmers under Lusip II benefit enormously. Kunene told the group that he was hopeful of showing off the finished product “soon”. The next stop was a visit to the recently completed rural electrification project at Lunkuntfu: it now benefits 81 homesteads and the local community hall, at a total cost to government of E950 000.

The tour ended at Qomintaba, near Lavumisa, where a 10MW Solar PV installation worth E24-million is being built by CONCO Energy Solutions. Project Manager Byron Sancho told the Portfolio Committee that construction work was proceeding well and that the scheduled completion target date was on track to be met. Sancho reaffirmed that the company prioritised the hiring of locals, and on this project had thus far employed about 40 from the area, with more to come. Making her remarks, Chairperson Princess Ntfombiyenkhusi said that as an appointed body responsible for the Ministry, the Portfolio Committee appreciated seeing projects of this magnitude which will take the country to a better level in terms of sustainable energy with access for all. She said that

not only will the economy of the country be improved, but also the lives of Emaswati, and EEC also deserves praise for furthering the cause of gender equality, as evidenced by the hiring of female engineers in most of its projects.

## KEEPING STOCK

In pursuit of energy security in the petroleum sector, government has for almost a decade been making preparations for the construction of a Strategic Fuel Reserve (SFR) facility at Phuzumoya in central Eswatini. His Majesty King Mswati III officially launched the SFR initiative on 18 October 2013 by means of a sod-cutting ceremony: a litany of challenges has subsequently prevented the E900-million undertaking from getting off the ground, and it was most recently said to be “at the resource-mobilisation stage”. The 90-million-litres facility was planned to include:

- Gasoline storage tanks
- Diesel storage tanks
- Piping systems
- Storage-dyke systems
- Oil/water separator systems
- Backup electricity-generation systems
- Railway-wagons loading/offloading system
- Loading-arms for loading trucks
- Limited truck-offloading systems

The government of the day had said that through the facility it aimed to ensure the supply of fuel for up to 90 days in the event that the country experiences shortages brought about by interrupted deliveries: the latter occur, albeit infrequently, when coastal storms affect harbour operations in South Africa and/or Mozambique, refineries/depots in those countries conduct emergency maintenance/repairs, or industrial action impacts upon cross-border transport.

A strategic fuel-reserve facility would support a corollary to the National Energy Policy, namely an all-embracing and comprehensive Petroleum Act, and for the finalisation of which government has for some time been engaged in the process of updating, amending and consolidating existing pieces of

legislation. The final outcome is intended to address the following issues:

- Regulation and deregulation of the oil industry
- Ensuring adequate product availability in rural areas
- Ensuring stable and reliable product availability for the country's economy
- Achieving regional competitiveness and fair pricing of petroleum fuels
- Encouraging meaningful and sustainable participation of locals in the industry
- Imposition of levies and taxes on petroleum products
- Administration of the Strategic Oil Reserve Fund
- Provision of information concerning motor vehicles

**Galp** is an integrated energy player, focused on finding and extracting oil and natural gas from sites around the world. Galp's success in the energy sector is evident through its increased global presence on important indexes measuring financial performance as well as best practices and sustainability. Galp aspires to be among the fastest growing companies in the oil and gas sector and is expanding its operations worldwide, maintaining a specific focus on selected African markets: in the downstream segment, Galp is currently present in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Eswatini.

Galp entered Eswatini after acquiring Royal Dutch Shell's operations in 2008: its activities in the kingdom include selling and distributing fuels, lubricants and LPG in the retail segment through a network of 22 service stations, six of which have Tangerina branded stores. In the business-to-business segment, Galp supplies over 150 customers. Galp Eswatini's fuel imports are Gasoil (diesel in 500 and 50 ppm grades), Unleaded Petrol (ULP 95), Paraffin and HFO, as well as aviation fuels. Galp Eswatini imports lubricants directly from its refinery in Portugal.

Galp Eswatini has a number of CSI programmes in communities in which it operates: these are centred around Education/Training, Health and Wellness.

Galp also supports the Esicojeni Foundation, engaging in initiatives such as 'Walk for Hunger' that strives to help eradicate child-hunger.

Puma Energy is a midstream and downstream petroleum company that operates across five continents in 47 countries, including Eswatini. One of the largest independent storage and downstream companies in Sub-Saharan Africa, it operates more than 662 retail sites and 29 airports in the region, and provides deliveries to industrial and commercial customers in some of the most remote areas. Puma Energy is a well-resourced and managed business with global know-how of the fuel industry, and understands the challenge of delivering sustainable growth in both emerging and mature markets. The company's success factors are:

- Wise and decisive investments
- Operating in strategic locations
- Operating efficiently
- Employing talent
- Responsive and flexible





# WATER RESOURCES

**Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg in his 2022/23 Budget Speech told Parliament and the nation that access to potable water in the country stands at 67 percent, foreseen to reach 75 percent come end-2023 and by when the many projects currently being implemented should have been completed. He cited these initiatives as including the potable water scheme in Shiselweni for four Tinkhundla centres, another four in the Manzini region, the rollout of Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project Phase II (LUSIP II), and the continuation of UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme. Minister Rijkenberg described the scenario as depicting "a great achievement, and government congratulates everyone involved".**

He then detailed how the just-mentioned LUSIP II's Main Canal and Secondary Distribution Systems were now complete and ready to facilitate the development and irrigation of 5 273 ha: the latter will in turn enable the establishment of 27 farming enterprises and create 4 500 jobs for Emaswati. LUSIP II received an E507-million budget allocation for the 2022/23 fiscal year. The Minister allocated E26-million to what he called the "very exciting" Mkhondvo/Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project which is due for completion in 2027 and comprises the construction of large dams, canals and a hydroelectric scheme. Initially irrigating 10 000 ha but ultimately around 30 000 ha, mainly in the Shiselweni region, the project is expected to create an additional 10 000 jobs at full implementation. Rijkenberg then delivered a brief status update on the parastatal Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise (ESWADE): he disclosed that its portfolio of projects – four completed and six ongoing – now impact over 152 000 people. ESWADE has undertaken water harvesting works which are of great significance, aimed at eradicating poverty and spurring economic activity.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA) is a binational organization established in 1992 under a Treaty between the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Eswatini, and is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Maguga (Eswatini) and Driekoppies (South Africa) dams and their ancillary infrastructure. KOBWA manages the water allocations enjoyed by the two countries from the Komati and Lomati rivers downstream of the dams: it reports to the Joint Water Commission (JWC) between South Africa and Eswatini, which is a body that was established in 1992 to act as a technical advisor to the two countries on all matters relating to the development and utilisation of water resources of common interest. KOBWA focuses on the operation and maintenance of the dams and related infrastructure, and its four departments are:

- **Water Management Department:** Responsible for planning and management of all activities on the bulk infrastructure, systems operation, systems development, emergency preparedness and other related functions. Its key focus areas are:

- Systems Operation
- Aquatic Ecosystems Monitoring
- Infrastructure Maintenance and Dam Safety
- Risk and Uncertainty Management
- Monitoring and Technical Support
- **Corporate Support Department:** Responsible for providing Human Resource and Information management support to the entire organization
- **Environment and Development Department:** Responsible for the implementation of KOBWA's Environmental Monitoring programme for the Komati Basin, as well as the Resettlement programme for persons affected by the construction of the Komati River Basin Project
- **Finance Department:** Responsible for full control of the repayment of loans, budgeting and financing development projects and procurement functions

A five-year Strategic Plan has been guiding the operations of the Authority, as well as aligning it with the current environment and the entity's potentially-expanded scope: the aim of the document was to set objectives, plans and targets that would be monitored and measured across the organization. The original strategic planning session involved all key stakeholders, including staff members, Trades Union representatives and the Department of Water Affairs of both Eswatini and South Africa.

In 2016 and in response to prevailing dry conditions and the scarcity of rainfall, KOBWA initiated a sensitisation programme whereby communities were educated about climate change and its adverse consequences which are extremes of both drought and rain. Communities were urged to adopt water-saving habits, to use just enough water for a task at hand, and to reuse water for other chores such as cleaning. This was also an opportunity for KOBWA representatives to inform communities about the Authority's mandate, as well as assess their sentiments regarding KOBWA and its operations that impact on their daily lives.

## THE MASTERPLAN

Eswatini's Department of Water Affairs falls under the

Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, and the kingdom's five main dams are:

- Mnjoli Dam, Black Mbuluzi River, 177-million m<sup>3</sup> capacity
- Lubovane Dam, Great Usuthu River, 155-million m<sup>3</sup> capacity
- Maguga Dam, Komati River, 332-million m<sup>3</sup> capacity
- Hawane Dam, Black Mbuluzi River, 2.75-million m<sup>3</sup> capacity
- Luphohlo Dam, Lusushwana River, 23.6-million m<sup>3</sup> capacity

The National Water Policy (NWP) declares that the kingdom's total renewable water resource is 4.51 km<sup>3</sup>/year, with 1.87 km<sup>3</sup>/year or 42 percent originating from South Africa. The country shares five major rivers with South Africa and Mozambique: in the north, the Komati and Lomati river systems originate in South Africa and flow to Mozambique and the Indian Ocean via Eswatini. The water resources of the Lomati river basin are intensively used and this has led to tension among the three countries.

Irrigated agriculture consumes the bulk (870 Mm<sup>3</sup>/

annum) of water, of which 67 percent goes to the sugarcane industry. The Mbuluzi River originates in Eswatini and flows into Mozambique. This river system also requires cooperation between the two countries in an effort to share the water resources therein equitably. The Usuthu River originates in South Africa and flows out through Eswatini into Mozambique, forming the border between Mozambique and South Africa. The Ngwavuma, in the south of the country, originates in Eswatini and flows into South Africa before entering Mozambique. There are no major underground water aquifers in Eswatini, so the yields are low. Groundwater sources are used mainly for drinking, especially in the drought-prone areas.

On the other hand, there are nine major dams with a height of more than 10 metres and total storage capacity of about 585 million m<sup>3</sup>. Among these, seven are used for irrigation purposes, one for hydroelectric purposes, and the other for water supply, while the larger dam, Maguga, was constructed in 2002 for irrigation, hydroelectricity generation and tourism. One dam is currently under construction and its main purpose shall be irrigation of sugarcane and other crops. Total withdrawals for agricultural, domestic and industrial purposes are estimated at almost 1 km<sup>3</sup>. Irrigation uses about 90-95 percent of the water resources in the country.



## LAY OF THE LAND

The country is divided into four physiographic regions that run almost parallel in a north-south direction, namely: Highveld, Middleveld, Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau. The climatic and topographic characteristics of these zones play a significant role in determining the land-use patterns in the country, which in turn affect water-use. The predominant land-uses include small-scale subsistence agriculture, large-scale commercial agriculture and communal grazing. The spatial distribution of water is uneven across the country; water sources are often not located where the demand is greatest, thus requiring reservoirs and conveyance systems to bring the water to the user, hence the need for storage. This also points to the need for effective water management institutions.

Eswatini faces a major challenge in continuing the sustainable development and efficient utilisation of its scarce water resources to support economic growth, diversification and poverty eradication. The strategies aimed at meeting national water demands in the future will need to be directed towards improving allocative efficiency in the provision of water and enhance technological developments to improve water resources stewardship and water-demand management. The national framework will facilitate access to water of suitable quality through integrated practices, and provide the foundations for the sustainable development of water resources in support of economic growth, diversification and poverty eradication. The broad rural water supply subsector policy objectives are to improve health and alleviate rural poverty through improved access to adequate and safe water. Therefore, the NWP intends to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Provide a national framework for sustainable development and management of water resources in support of economic growth, ecological integrity, human health and poverty eradication
- Promote equitable provision through access to adequate and good quality water for all
- Promote water resources allocative-efficiency practices
- Promote integrated and decentralised

management of water resources with particular emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

- Enhance resilience of the water resources through sound risk-management practices
- Ensure that transboundary obligations are met at all times and levels
- Promote sustainable economic development in the use of water
- Improve water security in the kingdom
- Ensure coordination of water resources planning with land-use planning and adoption of basin/catchment planning and management

## IDEALS AND OUTCOMES

An annexure to the main document asserts that key issues and policy statements under the NWP were developed in reference to the attainment of, among others, the UN-sanctioned Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and Targets, e.g. sustainable and equitable allocation and provision of water of appropriate quantity and quality, adapting to the effects of extreme climate events and addressing issues related to the water governance framework. The 17 SDGs and 169 Targets seek to demonstrate the scale and ambition of the new 'Universal Agenda', as the SDGs seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and complete what the MDGs did not achieve.

SDGs are integrated and indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental. Sustainable development is strongly connected to the availability of sufficient and good quality water for the preservation of healthy ecosystems, and is critical for socioeconomic and human development, thus the decision to incorporate a dedicated water goal, i.e. SDG-6 (ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) among the 17 SDGs. This is clear recognition that water is not only part of many other SDGs, but in many aspects also their precondition.

Although the water perspective is dedicated to the water goal (SDG-6), potential interlinkages with other goals and targets, including, among others,

SDG-2 (food security), SDG-3 (health and wellbeing), SDG-11 (resilient cities), SDG-12 (sustainable consumption) and SDG-15 (freshwater ecosystems) have also been highlighted within the key issues and policy statements of Eswatini's NWP. The latter will therefore contribute to achieving SDG-6, but also further contribute to the achievement of SDG-2, SDG-3, SDG-11, SDG-12, SDG-13 and SDG-15:

- By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising the release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- By 2030, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water-and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management
- By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity/production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality

The NWP will also complement the realisation of the following SDGs:

- SDG 3 - ensure healthy lives and promote the wellbeing of all
- SDG 11 - make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- SDG 12 - ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, and achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- SDG 13 - take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- SDG 15 - protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

Under the heading 'Climate-Change Resilience', the NWP declares that the water authority shall establish systems and technology to monitor and observe water resources, to understand the water balance and perform water accounting, improve meteorological services, and observe and respond to climate variance and long-term impacts of climate change. For this purpose, the authority shall:

- Prepare water and climate impact risk assessment and hazard mapping as part of district planning and basin management
- Establish meteorological services to water-users, agriculture, industry and communities to include Early Warning Systems and dynamic information networks
- Establish a Climate Centre of Excellence to contribute to water observation and monitoring, and water resource management, planning and decision-making
- Establish a water information management and custodial framework linking meteorological and climate services, agrometeorology, water balance monitoring, groundwater, supply and abstraction demand
- Invest in water-use-efficient irrigation systems

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to ensure that the public is enlightened on climate change issues, including mitigation and adaptation measures

### CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY

According to the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC), thanks to a significant, welcome number of residential, commercial and industrial developments that in recent years have been launched along the Matsapha-Manzini corridor, the demand for water services spiked accordingly. This led to the Corporation's Managing Director, Jabulile Mashwama, hosting a public function at which she addressed consumers' concerns. She began by disclosing that the EWSC had during the past 12 months been developing a plan aimed at resolving the constraints being experienced in the area.

Mashwama issued a precis of the Corporation's blueprint, along with its timebound deliverables, and gave an assurance that through its implementation of the plan, the EWSC will be able to meet the heightened levels of demand and thereby placate customers' anxieties regarding uncertainty going forward, as had been shared with the Corporation. The MD stated that after a comprehensive analysis of the constraints, the EWSC had subsequently opted to pursue a four-phase approach:

- To address the immediate water supply challenges in Tubungu, Police Academy, Emhlane and surrounding areas, the Corporation would integrate its network systems to ensure that the drop in reservoir levels did not affect supply to these areas. The mitigation measure was scheduled for implementation in the late evening.
- To address water supply challenges in Nhlambeni, Masundvweni, Sigodvweni and Mobeni, the Corporation was already implementing a mid-term to permanent solution by increasing storage capacity. The siting of a 3-megalitre reservoir at Emathangeni in Matsapha would serve as a dedicated alternate supply point for residential customers in cases where demand for industrial water is at peak level.
- To improve water supply in Kwaluseni, Mfabantfu

and surrounding areas, the Corporation would increase supply capacity by upgrading the pumping system to the Logoba reservoir.

- To improve the general quality of services and the growing demand for water in the Matsapha-Manzini corridor and surrounding areas, the Corporation was upgrading the Matsapha Water Treatment Plant to increase capacity to meet demand during the next financial year. The upgrade project would tie in with the larger, recently approved Manzini Integrated Water and Sanitation Project, which will ensure that water is supplied to additional areas under the Mafutseni, Nhlambeni, Manzini South and Mtfongwaneni constituencies. Government was investing close to E800-million in this project, which was scheduled for completion in 2022.

Mashwama stated that implementing the short-to medium-term works would require planned interruptions to the water supply. She assured the public that the usual 48-hour notice would be given to customers before scheduled shutdowns. Furthermore, she said, the Corporation would endeavour to minimise the impact of said interruptions by providing an alternative water supply through stationary tanks being sited in strategic places.

- UPDATE: EWSC called a media briefing to announce that significant progress had been made in the Matsapha-Manzini water supply system upgrade. Reporters were informed that, with over 80 percent of works implemented thus far, a noticeably improved water supply was being enjoyed by residents of Kwaluseni, Mfabantfu and surrounding areas. The Corporation said that it had increased supply-capacity by upgrading the pumping system that serves the Logoba reservoir: supply to homes in these areas had previously been compromised by ever-increasing demand. EWSC's spokesperson also revealed that construction of the 3-megalitre reservoir in Matsapha's Emathangeni subdivision was nearing the point where it could begin to address water supply challenges in Tubungu, Nhlambeni, Masundvweni, Sigodvweni and Mobeni.

## REGIONAL BOON

EWSC Managing Director, Jabulile Mashwama, revealed to stakeholders in the Manzini Region Water and Sanitation Project that she had requested the support of Traditional Authorities and Constituency Administration in the initiative's implementation. Mashwama said this during a scheduled stakeholder-engagement meeting at the EWSC Headquarters in Ezulwini, where project beneficiaries and affected communities had convened: additional meetings were yet to be held at the constituency level. The Manzini Region Water and Sanitation Project is an E800-million project financed by government and the African Development Bank, targeting Nhlambeni, Manzini South, Mtfongwaneni and Mafutseni.

The undertaking is based on the need to develop a more reliable and sustainable water supply in the project area, and the promotion of more environmentally friendly solutions for sanitation. Addressing the meeting which included Members of Parliament, Tindvuna teTinkhundla, Bucopho and Water Committees, Mashwama also highlighted that the preliminary project-briefing sessions were pertinent to allow meaningful contributions towards project designs, along with the identification of affected communities. She described community engagement in water and sanitation service-delivery as "key for ensuring project sustainability and accountability". The proposed water project will be one of the major initiatives to be implemented by EWSC, one that will impact an estimated 76 500 people across the target areas.

The potable water component of the project is envisaged to entail an upgrade of the existing Matsapha Water Treatment Plant, the construction of two reservoirs with a combined capacity of 23.5-megalitres, gravity and pump-driven mains, water reticulation pipelines and 25 water kiosks. EWSC's obligation is to reduce the number of people without access to water and sanitation, and through the water kiosk system the Corporation will provide access to clean and safe water at an affordable tariff. The 25 outlets will be distributed across the project area, with added consideration given to subdivisions that are in dire need of water and are densely populated.

Within the sanitation component, in the peri-urban areas the project will capacitate the various communities with knowledge and technical expertise on the construction of VIP (Ventilated Improved Pit-Latrines) toilets. A 2.2-megalitre wastewater treatment plant and a reticulation system will be constructed, targeting Sidvokodvo community cognisant of the proposed industrial town.

- **UPDATE:** EWSC announced that the Manzini Integrated Water Supply Project had got under way with the engagement of Gibb Africa consultants, which had begun developing detailed designs. The project will increase water supply capacity to meet future demand, and further provide water to additional areas under the Mafutseni, Nhlambeni, Manzini South and Mtfongwaneni constituencies. This project is expected to reach completion in 2022.

## ENHANCED STATUS

EWSC's water-meter verification laboratory is the first such facility in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region to attain accreditation. Making his remarks during the official certification event, Eswatini's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, described EWSC's achievement as "most commendable", and said that by attaining this lofty status, the Corporation has positioned itself on a trajectory to gain international recognition for its commitment to quality, competency and reliable services. Continuing, the Minister opined that accreditation of the laboratory had come at "exactly the right time, just when the kingdom is looking forward to attaining first world status, which entails the provision of competent services". He said it was envisaged that the facility will inspire confidence in customers, as they will feel sure of getting true value for their money.

Khumalo pointed out that many countries across the globe now rely on accreditation as a means of independently evaluating competence of verification laboratories, and qualified this by stating that: "Accreditation helps to achieve accurate calibration, measurement and testing, performed in accordance with best practice, as well as to limit errors and product failure, to control production costs and contribute to an innovative environment. Accreditation is, therefore, an essential tool for

decision-making, risk management and supplier selection. It can also provide a competitive advantage in domestic markets through access to public sector contracts, and also overseas with greater acceptance in export markets."

He also highlighted the fact that, in principle, the activities of water meter verification fall under legal metrology, which sets out conditions with which water meters should comply. According to the Minister, Eswatini's Metrology Act of 1991 mandates the Ministry, through the Weights and Measures department, with authority to control as many measuring instruments as possible for the protection of consumers, as well as users of such instruments. He thus took the opportunity to request EWSC to comply fully with the obligations of the Act and the technical regulations that are still under development: the latter shall spell out the water meter verification technical requirements, he said.

Khumalo went on to say it was also worth noting that accreditation of laboratories is in line with core policy number seven of the National Regulatory and Quality Policy (2010) which states that all conformity-assessment bodies must be accredited. "Government has made a commitment to help such entities in this regard by promoting and offering training on accreditation standards, as well as facilitating the accreditation process. Eswatini accredits its conformity-assessment activities through the multi-economy accreditation body, SADCAS," he added. The Minister highlighted that Eswatini now boasts a total of 10 accredited facilities, adding that government was looking forward to having yet more facilities achieve accreditation.

EWSC Managing Director, Jabulile Mashwama, said that as a customer-centric organization, investing in international quality systems was imperative for effective and reliable service delivery. "Ensuring accurate billing is one of our highest priorities," she continued, "and this accreditation will increase consumer confidence in the billing mechanism, as there is now a system to independently verify the authenticity thereof. This is but one of the many successes that we have achieved and which truly exemplify our true blue culture, where we show up in excellence and do all we can to meet customer expectations and win their hearts and minds because of reliable service."





# CONSTRUCTION

**Investment sentiment in Eswatini remains strong. The assertion was made by Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg, who said in his 2022/23 Budget Speech that government was pleased to note significant reinvestment initiatives by a number of large private companies. Of these positive indicators he highlighted the construction in Manzini of a new mall worth over E2-billion which is expected to commence during the financial year just begun, and similarly a commercial development near the new interchange, this with an estimated price-tag exceeding E3-billion.**

Moving on to State-funded initiatives, the Minister began by pointing out that government is constructing factory shells across the country, and that during 2022/23 the initiative will entail the completion of the Gamula factory shell, Mantambe factory shell, Hlathikhulu factory shell and the Johnson Workwear site in the Jabulani area near Nhlangano. He said that the last-mentioned, huge factory will be finished at the same time as the Sicunusa road along which it is located. Altogether, Rijkenberg said, these factory shells are expected to employ over 6 000 people. The Minister then spoke of the recently completed Manzini Trade Hub: he said that government had observed its full utilisation, for which all informal traders should be thanked.

In the health sector, Minister Rijkenberg continued, significant investment has been made during the COVID-19 response by government and development partners. He namechecked these major initiatives as including:

- Building a specialised COVID-19 ward at Lubombo Referral Hospital
- Repurposing the National TB Hospital in Manzini
- Constructing oxygen plants at the Luke Commission and Lubombo Hospital

Furthermore:

- Phase 1 construction has been completed at Mbabane Government Hospital, and Phase 2 will begin this new financial year
- The repurposed Manzini Hospital with a focus for treatment of NCDs is near completion
- In an effort to improve access to health services countrywide, the construction of six new clinics has begun

Eswatini recently experienced a tropical cyclone along with other bouts of unseasonal heavy downpours, resulting in damage across the country to roads, bridges and houses worth many millions of Emalangeni. The Finance Minister said that government swiftly mobilised resources to reconstruct more than 270 houses and 68 bridges. Echoing the words of Prime Minister Cleopas Sipho Dlamini at a news conference after Cabinet's pre fiscal-year retreat, Rijkenberg gave an assurance that

"attention will be given" to finding a lasting solution to the shortcomings of the country's road network.

Rijkenberg said that government continues to improve and expand infrastructure provisions in schools and tertiary institutions. Most recently, 169 classrooms and 49 staff houses were constructed, and 99 structures were rehabilitated. At the tertiary level, the rehabilitation of Emlaladini, VOCTIM and ECOT is ongoing. Government also undertook the construction of hand-washing facilities in many primary and secondary schools.

The Minister allocated E26-million to what he called the "very exciting" Mkhondvo/Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project which is due for completion in 2027 and comprises the construction of large dams, canals and a hydroelectric scheme.

## LANDMARK DEVELOPMENT

Prime Minister Cleopas Sipho Dlamini at the abovementioned Cabinet retreat media briefing announced that during the coming 12 months, attention will be given to the completion of key capital projects including the construction of the International Convention Centre and adjoining Five-Star Hotel (ICCFISH). Situated in the bespoke residential area and much-visited tourist destination, Ezulwini (The Valley of Heaven), ICCFISH was described by His Majesty King Mswati III as contributing to the country's status as one of the most conducive locations for investment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The ICC component will be a six-storey building (plus basement) covering more than 40 000 sq m, with facilities comprising:

- Auditorium/Theatre holding up to 1 800 patrons
- Several Conference/Meeting Rooms
- Exhibition Hall
- Chamber with VVIP Reception/Holding Rooms
- Multipurpose Banquet Hall hosting up to 1 500 guests
- Multipurpose Rooms
- Five-Star Restaurant capable of seating more than 340 guests

# MANUFACTURERS OF READY MIX CONCRETE



Mix Solutions (Proprietary) Limited was incorporated on 1st July 2012 under certificate no. 578 of 2012 (Swaziland) as a private limited liability company and with the following main objectives.

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The FISH will also cover more than 40 000 sq m and be a six-storey building (plus basement). Accommodation will comprise:

- Approximately 300 rooms, of these:
  - 260 Standard Rooms (~50 sq m), with the remainder made up of
  - Junior Suites (~100 sq m)
  - Executive Suites (~200 sq m)
  - Presidential Suites (~300 sq m)

Facilities are to comprise:

- Five-Star Restaurant
- Multipurpose Rooms
- Gymnasium (two-level)

The ICC and FISH will be linked by a Skywalk to enable flow between the two facilities. Its features will include:

- Coffee Shop with panoramic view of the Mdzimba Mountains
- Several high-end shops along its length
- Elevators

## ENERGY-WISE

The Finance Minister declared in his 2022/23 Budget Speech that the Petroleum Act of 2020 is now operational and establishes the Eswatini National Petroleum Company (ENPC), which is responsible for the planned construction and operation of the long-awaited Strategic Fuel Reserve (SFR) facility at Phuzumoya in the Lubombo region. He then announced an allocation of E529-million to the Ministry of Natural Resources to carry out its programmes. His Majesty King Mswati III officially launched the SFR initiative on 18 October 2013 by means of a sod-cutting ceremony: a litany of challenges has subsequently prevented the E900-million undertaking from getting off the ground, and it was most recently said to be "at the resource-mobilisation stage".

The SFR has thus far been heralded as a 90-million-litres assurance of national fuel supply for up to 90 days in the event that the country experiences

shortages brought about by interrupted deliveries: the latter occur, albeit infrequently, when coastal storms affect harbour operations in South Africa and/or Mozambique, refineries/depots in those countries conduct emergency maintenance/repairs, or industrial action impacts upon cross-border transport. The SFR was originally planned to comprise:

- Gasoline storage tanks
- Diesel storage tanks
- Piping systems
- Storage-dyke systems
- Oil/water separator systems
- Backup electricity-generation systems
- Railway-wagons loading/offloading system
- Loading-arms for loading trucks
- Limited truck-offloading systems
- Road network
- Concrete, rock and asphalt paving
- Administration block
- Laboratory
- Water-treatment/sewerage system
- Potable-water utilities

According to a Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy status report on the implementation of what is regarded as a very important national project, the preliminary works of Phase 1 undertaken to date were:

- A construction work-plan has been prepared by the primary contractor, and activities are undertaken in line therewith
- Designs for the fuel storage facility have been completed
- The contractor has cleared the undergrowth and stripped the topsoil
- The Ministry has zoned the site, coordinates for the project have been defined, and a coordinate diagram has been produced

- Eswatini Electricity Company, at the Ministry's request, has begun constructing a transformer to service the facility
- The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has completed preliminary designs for an access road to the site, estimated the cost of constructing the access road and is working on finalising the detailed designs
- Eswatini Railways has been engaged to supply bulk water to the facility and is laying onsite pipes

## PASTORAL SURROUNDS

Millions of Emalangenzi are being pumped into an initiative that launched luxurious apartment-living in the bucolic small town of Malkerns in the heart of Eswatini's pineapple-growing country. The development - Malkerns Square - is sited on 42 ha between the Mbabane/ Ezulwini and Matsapha/Manzini corridors. The first two phases of the residential estate component are reportedly complete, resulting in 147 units comprising 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments, along with 8 double-storey units. According to the developers, they plan to build about 1 100 apartments by 2030. The construction of a 2 200 sqm shopping centre is complete, with a 5 000 sqm addition planned for the future.

Malkerns Square's prospectus described the undertaking thus: "It provides quality, modern lifestyle-living between two major economic nodes, with great infrastructure access, transport and utilities. On offer is the opportunity to be part of a lifestyle-village estate, where villages are expressed with modern architecture and within a master-planned precinct of distinction. The villages are designed to have unique elements, including architecture, use of colour and landscaping that together enable each close community to express itself individually, whilst still being part of a larger community where the benefits of being in a modern master-planned precinct apply: these include modern road networks, parks, landscaping and infrastructure services. The master-planning also provides convenient access to shops, easy access to units, green corridors, pedestrian-friendly movement, and a safe haven for families. There are a number of accommodation offerings, as well as future gated communities, and plot-and-plan opportunities.

"Malkerns Square is centred around beautifully-designed buildings and inspiring, timeless architecture: the first village celebrates the modernism of Bauhaus. High-quality construction and great finishes hallmark every apartment. The eco-estate design includes running and walking



Entrance to Malkerns Square

paths, village parks, green community spaces, sports fields and courts, barbecue areas and more, with an emphasis on community, family, youth and retirement. The estate is designed with sustainable energy solutions in mind, including solar power, along with environmentally sustainable water management based on recycling and efficiency."

## SECTOR OVERSEER

All companies and persons involved in construction in Eswatini are required by law to be registered with the kingdom's Construction Industry Council (CIC), the mission statement of which reads: "To regulate, develop and promote the construction industry for the benefit of all stakeholders through transformation for sustainable growth, monitoring industry performance, research and empowerment, thus improving the socio-economic status of the country".

The CIC's powers:

- Direct any contractor or person providing services in the construction industry to deliver its services in a manner that ensures compliance with the Act
- Require any person or contractor to provide necessary records and information that will enable the Council to monitor the performance of the contractor
- Consider any matter affecting the construction industry and make necessary recommendations to the Minister
- Obtain information related to the industry from any person engaged in the construction industry in Eswatini
- Obtain and collate information concerning any existing or proposed projects and where necessary, advise persons engaged in the construction industry on the project
- To work together with the bodies in Eswatini and elsewhere on matters affecting the construction industry
- To recommend the approval of institutions in Eswatini and outside for the training of persons engaged in the construction industry
- To employ professional, technical and administrative staff as it may consider requisite

and lay down conditions of services for the employees

- Pay any person in its employ such salary, wages or remuneration as it may consider adequate
- Generally, to do such things as the Council may consider necessary or expedient for the performance of its functions under the Act

The CIC's functions:

- Promote and develop the construction industry in Eswatini, give priority to Swati firms and companies
- Facilitate Swati firms and companies to have access to resources for the development of their operations
- Assess the performance of contractors in the execution of contracts and thus provide a performance record for contractors
- Regulate the behaviour and promote minimum standards and best practice for contractors
- Provide data on the size and distribution of contractors operating within the industry
- Promote research, development and the use of competitive local materials and appropriate construction material
- Promote and facilitate the construction of affordable low-cost housing in consultation with the Ministry of Housing
- Set and promote safety standards in the construction industry
- Prescribe the categories for the registration of persons engaged in the construction industry
- Monitor and evaluate, from time to time, the capacity and progress of persons engaged in the construction industry
- Regulate activities in the construction industry through the appropriate institutions, Boards and other authorities, as the case may be
- Recommend to the Minister, the conditions under which a foreign firm or company may be registered and permitted to operate in Eswatini

## NEW ALLIANCE

The CIC and EswatiniBank have in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at the two entities jointly promoting and developing the sector. Making his remarks during the signing event, EswatiniBank Managing Director (MD), Zakhele Lukhele, said that the alliance will see the institution provide working capital and other banking services to contractors. He made a commitment to the CIC that in the event of being approached by contractors, EswatiniBank will educate them and furthermore provide the required services as identified. Continuing, the MD gave an assurance that his staff will also explain to CIC stakeholders exactly what is expected of them when approaching the Bank. He concluded by declaring that EswatiniBank looks forward to its formalised relationship with the CIC, and is optimistic that it will play a significant role in growing the construction industry and the country's economy.

CIC Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Nhlanhla Dlamini, expressed his gratitude to the Bank for agreeing to the relationship which he said will go a long way towards developing the industry. He spoke of how, when the CIC was promulgated, EswatiniBank was the only financial institution in the country "willing to give us an ear and embrace our business model". This led the CIC to believe, he said, that the structured partnership will play a significant role in ensuring that the Council meets its mandate. The CEO opined that the signing of the MoU will provide an opportunity for industry players to have preferential access to financing options, notwithstanding the need for the Bank to consider the risk factors involved.

Dlamini also declared that the MoU could not have come at a better time, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic, as the Bank will be able to provide financial advice and contributions to the sector. The alliance will impart to CIC members invaluable lessons on how to run their businesses in terms of financial acumen which, the CEO conceded, has been a challenge within the industry, in particular among newer and less experienced entrants. He thus expressed confidence that the collaboration will enhance the kingdom's construction landscape, while the implementation of the MoU will simultaneously

serve to promote the two organizations' strategic goals. The CIC CEO concluded his remarks by emphasising the importance of the fact that the objectives and values of the MoU with EswatiniBank are aligned to His Majesty's Vision 2022 and beyond, for sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability.





# TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

***Government in early 2022 conceded that the country's public roads exhibited "devastating deterioration" as a result of unseasonal heavy rainfall on surfaces weakened by "many years of glaringly inadequate maintenance". The resulting challenge to the upliftment of economic development gave rise to countermeasures that included an unprecedented move by Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg, who revealed in his Budget Speech 2022/23 that, as a "sustainable and permanent solution to our roads crisis", the establishment of a Roads Agency Fund had been tabled in Parliament with the objective of tendering out all road maintenance to the private sector, and envisaged to be financed in part by the savings from shutting down government departments currently responsible for road maintenance.***

Other sources were listed as the Road Toll charges levied at the kingdom's border crossings, additional funds from the fiscus, and an additional 30 cents Fuel Tax that the Minister intends to table alongside the Fuel Tax Bill. He disclosed that discussions with the affected civil servants had already begun, and invited them to use their retrenchment packages to form companies to do the actual maintenance work, as government would like to see the Road Agency Fund empower smaller, local contractors. Rijkenberg's final comment on the matter was to "once again thank the Members of Parliament for this wonderful initiative".

Prime Minister Cleopas Sipho Dlamini at the conclusion of Cabinet's weeklong pre-2022/23 fiscal year retreat told media representatives that government will during the coming 12 months pay particular attention to roads rehabilitation. Similarly, he continued, will be the completion of key capital projects including the Manzini Golf Course Interchange and the Sicunusa-Nhlangano road which was recently commissioned, while government also looks forward to the handover of projects such as the MR1 Manzini-Mbadlane (Lot 1&2) road that has recently been completed.

The PM pointed out that the current poor state of the country's road network did not reflect a lack of effort, as the Administration had been forging ahead with robust maintenance plans to improve the country's roads infrastructure: "The heavy rains which are so welcome in the agricultural sector have been a drawback on roads rehabilitation initiatives." He then listed other positive developments of considerable benefit to the nation as it entered 2022, and which reflected that over 90 percent of the roads earmarked for maintenance had been covered:

- Roads covering 1 328 km had been bladed countrywide
- Three other major roads were upgraded to paved standard, namely
  - Siteki-Tikhuba (D12)
  - Siphocosini-Sigangeni (D78)
  - Siphambanweni-Nsalitje (MR21)
- The Probase project covering 200 km has been completed

- Major projects underway are the rehabilitation of the Mhlangeni-Nhlangano and Mafutseni-Mliba roads

Returning to the 2022/23 Budget Speech, Minister Rijkenberg declared that there has not been enough preventative maintenance of the kingdom's tarred roads, which involves regular tasks such as sealing cracks and ensuring that drainage is kept open. The gravel roads also need to be shaped more regularly and re-graveled when needed, he said. This was followed by the announcement that government was allocating an additional E80-million to the Ministry of Works for the maintenance of roads, and re-prioritising a further E150-million to its capital budget to begin resurfacing existing tar roads where patching is becoming counter-productive. The Minister then voiced the following assertions:

- The completion of the Lukhula-Big Bend road (MR 13) and the progress made on the upgrades of the Manzini-Mbadlane highway (MR 3) will significantly transform Eswatini's road transport landscape
- The improvements that have been achieved in the rural areas by introducing Probase technology and the single-seal approach to road paving, have also contributed positively to improving the country's road network
- Prioritisation of roads in the Shiselweni region remains key in ensuring that the benefits of growth are enjoyed by all citizens and residents of Eswatini. The re-launch of the Nhlangano-Sicunusa road (MR13) is a positive contribution to the realisation of this vision, one that will ultimately stimulate economic activity along the Nhlangano-Sicunusa corridor and which government anticipates will be completed within the next 18 months

## SKYWARDS

Minister Rijkenberg said that a noteworthy success of which he felt particularly proud was the completion of the highway between Manzini and King Mswati III International Airport. Regarding the latter, he continued, it has since operations began in 2014 not yet experienced full capacity, and even though commercial activity remains constrained, efforts

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are underway to increase airline activity and have the airport facility operating as a distribution hub to other destinations. Rijkenberg then disclosed that Royal Eswatini National Airline Corporation (RENAC) - which is a parastatal mandated to revive the local aviation industry - had acquired two 50-seater airplanes to operate flights between Eswatini and Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Harare. He said that the aircraft were currently being rebranded, in anticipation of the service becoming operational in June 2022.

### STATE CARRIER

RENAC was established in 1978 as a national airline. After a restructuring exercise that lasted from 1996 to 1999, a joint-venture between the government of Eswatini and the then South African Airlink led to the creation of an airline that is now called Eswatini Airlink. The preexisting entity retained its ticket sales agency, as well as its aviation fuel supply business at Matsapha International Airport.

In 2016, RENAC was given the mandate to revive the national airline, and in its quest to achieve said aspiration, the Corporation has established various air travel support business units. The current portfolio encompasses a range of services such as

airline ticket sales, travel insurance, holiday packages, cruise packages, hotel booking, car rental, shuttle booking, ground handling services, aviation fuel sales, private air charter services, as well as commercial air charter brokerage services. The company is under its charter wing also responsible for all State travel.

RENAC boasts highly experienced aviation personnel, as well as a qualified and committed workforce in all its departments. It envisions being the continent's pride in travel solutions, globally connecting the kingdom through offering safe, efficient and competitive services which ensure customer excellence. The Corporation complies with international quality and safety standards, as well as world best practices. RENAC sees itself in collaboration with key stakeholders playing a pivotal role in the transformation of the local air transport industry, for the benefit of both the passenger and airfreight sectors.

### REGULATOR

The Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) is an administrative and commercial statutory body established by government and which became operational on 7 December 2009: it is mandated to provide, in an economically viable manner and

in accordance with international standards, air transport services and the regulation of civil aviation activities in Eswatini. As civil aviation is a very technical and heavily regulated global industry, it became necessary to establish an autonomous body that would focus on the growth and professional management of the industry and have the Minister of Transport as its political head.

Through an eight-point strategic plan, the Authority's focus has been on addressing the eight critical elements raised by an ICAO audit conducted in 2007 and which resulted in a ban of Eswatini-registered aircraft by the European Union. ESWACAA's immediate objective is to ensure that Eswatini complies with all laid down industry standards. The Authority is also attracting air transport business into Eswatini for tourism, trade and investment. ESWACAA manages all airports in the country, namely King Mswati III International Airport and Matsapha International Airport.

### FACILITIES

King Mswati III International Airport (KM III) was opened on 7 March 2014 and the first commercial flight took place on 30 September that year. It is the kingdom's major international airport, with the capacity to accommodate large aircraft and long-haul flight operations that connect Eswatini directly with the world. It is located on flat terrain with good visibility, and is a strategic gateway to Eswatini and the surrounding region for tourism and trade, passengers and cargo. The state-of-the-art facility is capable of simultaneously handling - to the safety and security standards required internationally - two Code E aircraft such as the Boeing 747, Boeing 777 and Airbus 340, and three Code C aircraft such as the ERJ 135.

The KMIII complex is arranged in a public precinct of structures which includes the terminal building, cargo building, various support buildings and public parking areas that cater for 200 vehicles in a modern facility designed to international standards. As described by ESWACAA, the airport is "a visual statement and symbol of Eswatini as a country, an array of modern buildings set in extensive gardens of visual texture and colour, with an overall effect of blurring the boundary between structures and landscapes".

The terminal building is designed to accommodate 360 000 passengers annually, while processing about 300 passengers an hour: it is designed to meet the functional expectations of the traveller, and presents a sophisticated gateway into Eswatini by receiving passengers into large, multi-volume departure and arrivals halls that scoop natural light into the heart of the building. The waiting lounge is located in a large, spatial volume that supports two embarkation gates with a choice of duty-free shopping options. From this lounge the waiting passenger has a view of the runway and aircraft movements. The terminal building is capable of meeting all current flight and passenger projections, and is also designed to meet the future needs of the airport to expand and absorb projected future air-passenger and cargo demands for the region. The 1 200 sq metre cargo building is capable of managing the current cargo projections efficiently, and is designed to expand according to the airport's future requirements.

### SUPPORTING

Matsapha Airport: ESWACAA continues to manage and operate this facility as an alternate aerodrome to cater for VVIP movements, mercy flights, and for the establishment of the Eswatini Civil Aviation Training Academy (SCATA). The establishment of SCATA is the answer to the skills that need to be upgraded to keep pace with the evolving knowledge and expectations of the industry, and to reduce dramatically the cost of training that the Authority presently faces, as it has to send staff out of the country for training at very high cost.

Nhlangano Airstrip: In the pipeline is the development of the Nhlangano Airstrip into a usable aerodrome to service the south of the country.

### TANKS FULL

The Petroleum Act of 2020 is now operational and establishes the Eswatini National Petroleum Company, which is to be responsible for the planned construction and operation of a Strategic Fuel Reserve (SFR) facility at Phuzumoya in the Lubombo region. Government has thus allocated E529-million to the Ministry of Natural Resources to carry out its programmes. His Majesty King Mswati III officially launched the SFR initiative on 18 October 2013 by means of a sod-cutting ceremony: a litany of



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challenges has subsequently prevented the E900-million undertaking from getting off the ground, and it was most recently said to be “at the resource-mobilisation stage”.

Through the SFR, government aims to ensure the supply of fuel for up to 90 days in the event that the country experiences shortages brought about by interrupted deliveries: the latter occur, albeit infrequently, when coastal storms affect harbour operations in South Africa and/or Mozambique, refineries/depots in those countries conduct emergency maintenance/repairs, or industrial action impacts upon cross-border transport. Phuzumoya is a strategically-critical location for the SFR site: it is here that the line to/from Eswatini Railways' International Satellite Port at Matsapha branches northeast to Maputo harbour in Mozambique, and southeast to the ports of Richards Bay and Durban in South Africa. The SFR was originally planned to comprise:

- Gasoline storage tanks
- Diesel storage tanks
- Piping systems
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- Backup electricity-generation systems
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request, has begun constructing a transformer to service the facility

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## RAILFREIGHT

Railways continue to be the prime mode of transportation of bulk commodities: among sector participants, a major source of speculation remains the 'Trans-Eswatini Rail Link' involving the kingdom and neighbouring South Africa, the implementation of which has long been impacted by adverse economic events globally and regionally. In 2012,



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the two countries saw it appropriate to initiate an approximately E17-billion Joint Railway Strategic Initiative between South Africa's Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) and Eswatini Railways (ESR). The venture entails building a 146 km line from Eswatini's northwest border to Sidvokodvo in the centre of the country, and from there refurbishing the 131 km of existing line to the southeast border.

The resulting rail-freight corridor between South Africa's Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) provinces – specifically the coalfields of the former and the latter's coal terminal at Richards Bay – will bring substantial benefits to both countries and their parastatal railways: for TFR the aim is to free its 68-million-tonnes-per-annum line through rural KZN of the 15-million tonnes taken up by general freight, which ESR will instead move through the kingdom and generate substantial revenue in the process. Most recently, Finance Minister Rijkman announced that on the Eswatini side, preliminary works on the project have commenced, and that to prepare the route for construction, 253 project-affected properties have to be resettled. He also disclosed that ESR has embarked on the expansion of its Inland Container Depot/Dry Port at Matsapha, for which funds amounting to US\$969 000 have been secured from the Republic China-Taiwan to finance the development of architectural designs and a feasibility study.

ESR's Strategic Plan to 2022 was said to have come at a time when the company was facing a great deal of competition from its external environment, so it was compelled to consider capturing and creating new demand in uncontested marketplaces. As a result, the ESR Board adopted a Blue Ocean strategy which demands that the entity survives competition, and in the process identifies niche markets in which to thrive and make competition irrelevant. ESR has thus formulated a business strategy that focuses on core competencies and value propositions, as well as the company's competitive advantages. The Blue Ocean strategy is focused on the key areas of diversification, efficiency and high performance through harmonious relationships. The corresponding initiatives through which ESR aims to achieve its vision of being “a sustainable high-performing logistics hub” are:

- Business Diversification programme
- Systems Integration programme
- Relationship Development programme

Each has several component projects, which will ensure that they meet their objectives. Ultimately, these focus areas are aimed at providing a seamless service to current and future customers, being proactively oriented, and diversifying services to provide total logistics solutions. Among the Business Diversification programme's projects is the Public Siding and Warehousing initiative which was born through the Total Logistics concept. These projects are an addition to the already existing ESR Capital Infrastructure Projects, namely:

- Eswatini Rail Link
- Mpaka Inland Container Depot
- Expansion of Matsapha Inland Container Depot
- Sidvokodvo-Phuzumoya upgrades
- Mananga-Goba Junction

ESR top management concedes that Blue Ocean will require a huge capital outlay for it to be effectively implemented, as it is an investment-intensive means to address some of the internal weaknesses that are currently constraining the company. As a result, the focus of the strategy is on business development in order to be “a Sustainable High-Performance Logistics Hub by 2022”, which is the Company's new vision statement. At the 2019 Eswatini Quality Awards – sponsored by the European Union, organized and hosted by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade – ESR won both ‘Company of the Year’ and ‘Service of the Year’. The latter award was for the second consecutive year, while in 2018 ESR also won the SADC Quality Award for Best Parastatal.

### INNOVATIVE TRUCKING

Cargo Carriers initiated cane transport operations in the Eswatini sugar industry in 1961 with the opening of the Mhlume depot.

Cargo Carriers' Sugar Division operates from two registered depots strategically placed in Eswatini (at Big Bend and Mhlume). The Sugar Division provides selective logistics services within the sugar

industry supply chain: these include infield loading and haulage, direct-to-mill and zone-to-mill cane haulage.

Over the past 20 years, Cargo Carriers has invested substantially in systems, software development and the development of logistical skills, and has transformed from purely a trucking company into a logistics and supply chain service provider, based on the experience and fundamentals of intelligent trucking.

In recent years the company embarked on a concerted Safety, Health, Environment and Quality (SHEQ) initiative, and has made industry-leading strides in becoming accredited on various SHEQ fronts.

The company is ISO 9001:2015 and 14001:2015 and OHSAS 45001:2018 accredited. Quality accreditation and continuous improvement of these procedures and practices are likewise a vital cog in the wheel for Cargo Carriers' business.

### ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Cargo Carriers has committed itself to social responsibility and development by establishing joint-venture transportation and logistics businesses, including owner-driver programmes within some

of the key industry verticals in which the company operates. In 2003, Cargo Carriers launched its Owner Driver / Empowerment programme empowering 32 individual entrepreneurs and in 2008, this same programme was successfully rolled out in Eswatini.

### *Innovation lies at the heart of the Cargo Carriers Eswatini Way*

### *Success is best when it is shared*

Reflective of the company's commitment to positive change, the business is passionate about promoting long-term financial success, skills development, attracting and retaining scarce and specialist skills. March 2021, saw the launch of the ‘Cargo Carriers Eswatini Employee Trust’, where the company partnered with employees to create a culture of ownership where employees share in the future success of the business.

With Cargo Carriers' track record of innovation, careful strategy and operational efficiency in the sugar industry, it has established itself as much more than a sugar transporter and is proud to be a stakeholder in Eswatini's economy and its people.





# HEALTHCARE

***The health of the nation is an important resource, one in which government will continue to invest. This declaration, made by Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg, was immediately followed by a budget allocation of E2.42-billion to the Ministry of Health for its activities during 2022/23. Rijkenberg pointed out that the total amount translates into a per-capita outlay of approximately E2 069, which positions the Kingdom of Eswatini in the top 10 percent of health-spending throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.***

Government noted with appreciation the health sector's achievements in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic - as well as other diseases such as TB and HIV/AIDS - but was concerned about the surge in malaria cases. Prevention-measures are being enhanced, as are strategies to improve procurement processes incorporating all medicines.

Before detailing specific interventions, Finance Minister Rijkenberg said with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic: "Echoing His Majesty's Speech from the Throne, let me take this opportunity to encourage Eswatini to continue to take advantage of the vaccines, as they remain our best line of defence as the world opens up and the disease is downgraded from public health crisis to manageable risk. We must embrace this new normal and take every action within our power to keep ourselves and our families safe, and return to a sustainable growth path."

His Budget Speech continued with the affirmation that significant investment has been made by government and development partners in the health sector during the COVID-19 response. Major investments were said to include:

- Repurposing of the National TB Hospital in Manzini
- Construction of oxygen plants at the Luke Commission and Lubombo Hospital
- Installation of bulk oxygen tanks at the Luke Commission and Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital
- The building of a ward for COVID-19 at Lubombo Referral Hospital

Construction of Lubombo Referral Hospital began during 2002/3, but the initiative was mothballed soon thereafter, until recommencing in 2011. The facility became operational in October 2014, before encountering a series of challenges that in 2019 led to a recommendation that it be closed. Early 2020 then witnessed resuscitation efforts along with an E57-million capital projects budget allocation, which proved fortuitous: less than a week after the Prime Minister led a delegation to assess the preparedness of the hospital - which duly received the green light - the country confirmed its first case of COVID-19.

The factors that make Lubombo Referral Hospital ideal were said to include:

- Located away from the hustle and bustle of Mbabane and Manzini, and isolated enough not to pose any threat of further contamination
- Accommodates up to 200 patients in the worst-case scenario
- Dedicated ambulance-parking: two such vehicles have been reserved for the COVID-19 crisis
- Incoming patients will use one exclusive entrance point to the main building
- All wards/rooms have red bin-liners for incinerator-destined waste
- The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) includes four rooms, each with a maximum of four beds, and is complemented by an operating theatre
- Once stabilised, post-ICU patients are moved to another department
- Each department has a dedicated team of doctors, supervisors and nurses, this to ensure containment of the virus

Returning to the 2022/23 Budget Speech, Finance Minister Rijkenberg continued:

- Regional hospitals have improved their capacity to manage severely ill patients. This capacity will assist the country to manage other critically ill patients even post-COVID-19. The country has developed a surveillance system for COVID-19 and other illnesses in order to monitor and respond quickly should another outbreak occur in the future.
- Government is in the process of decentralising the treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) such as diabetes, and which have been spread out among 116 of 239 primary health facilities. In addition, the associated medicines have been declassified so that they can be accessible at clinic level.
- Phase 1 construction at Mbabane Government Hospital has been completed, and Phase 2 will begin this new financial year.
- The repurposed Manzini Hospital with a focus

on treatment of NCDs is near completion. The oncology unit will move in immediately, allowing government to expand chemotherapy treatment to nearly four times that which could be offered at Mbabane Government Hospital.

- In an effort to improve access to health services, the construction of six new clinics is under way.
- Following the high burden of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection and cervical cancer cases in the country, government has budgeted E20-million and plans to introduce the HPV vaccine for schoolgirls aged 9–14 years.

## REMUNERATION

The Finance Minister conceded that a persistent challenge over the last few years has been adequate and timely payment for medicines. He said that government has prioritised this issue since 2019, and the stock and supply of medicines has been improving steadily ever since: in particular, the clearance of arrears in this area has had a significant positive impact on the supply and pricing of medicines. Rijkenberg gave an assurance that government will continue to prioritise this sector and ensure that orders and payments are made on time, this to avoid gaps in the medicine supply. He added that an electronic Logistics Management Information System is being rolled out to enhance the efficiency, transparency and accountability of medicines supply and delivery. Yet further, government is exploring other avenues to enhance efficiency, including outsourcing the procurement and dispensing of medicines to the private sector.

## HIV/AIDS

Minister Rijkenberg informed Parliament and the nation that HIV-prevalence in the kingdom now stands at 27 percent, with estimated new infections for the year declining to 3 300: he described the achievement as attributable to the country's HIV-response initiatives. Eswatini has surpassed the 95-95-95 HIV/AIDS milestone, he declared, even though COVID-19 has posed a risk to hard-won gains made in previous years. Rijkenberg emphasised that government, alongside and its partners, has remained vigilant to the devising of various strategies to both maintain the milestones reached and keep all

Emaswati in good health. He said that government continues to appreciate the support of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Geneva-registered Global Fund.

## BIG HELPING HAND

The latter recently bestowed on Eswatini a US\$54-million grant allocation for its fight against malaria, TB and HIV during the period ending 2024, significantly more than the allocation that began in 2018 and ended in 2020 for malaria and 2021 for both TB and HIV. Government said that the kingdom was highly indebted to the Global Fund for continuing to support its endeavours to build resilient and sustainable systems for health: the allocations were initiated in 2003, and with the latest disbursement exceed in total the equivalent of over E4.2-billion.

Government also continued to encourage the principal recipients of the grant to intensify their collaborations with all implementing partners in order to fast-track projects and processes on the ground, and thereby realise tangible benefits for the health sector, ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goal of healthcare for all was attained. It emphasised how intervention programmes that have benefited from the Global Fund over the years have brought Eswatini close to the elimination of malaria, decreased the incidence of TB and seen a reduction in new HIV infections. The Administration attributed the improved grant to "the vision, leadership and commitment demonstrated by His Majesty King Mswati III" in the country's response against HIV, TB and malaria, pointing out that the monarch had made a pledge of US\$6-million to the Global Fund during the Replenishment Summit held in France. The kingdom was "already seeing the fruits of HM's vision, foresight and commitment to the fight against the three dread diseases and for overall universal health", an official statement observed.

Also congratulated for working closely with government to attract this level of funding from the Global Fund over the years were the Country Coordinating Mechanism, Ministry of Health, National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) and in-country partners such as PEPFAR, the United States government, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). The Kingdom of

Eswatini formally expressed its appreciation of the role played by development partners in supporting the HIV and AIDS response, as the intervention went a long way towards achieving measurable results and impacted on joint-response to Eswatini's development needs: the country had made great progress in the war against HIV. PEPFAR, as a key partner, had over the years invested heavily in the HIV response and thus made a telling contribution towards the vision of ending AIDS.

Government asserted that Eswatini had already saved over 15 000 lives, prevented millions of HIV infections, and was moving towards controlling the global HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2022. It acknowledged the role that the UN has played through the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is a programme that commenced in 2016 with a financial envelope of US\$80-million to support the fast-tracking of Eswatini's development objectives in collaboration with development partners, and working to deliver a harmonised response to HIV and AIDS. The statement concluded by emphasising the importance of giving an assurance that this framework – which runs until 2025 – is nationally-owned and anchored on national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter.

## HIV/AIDS SITUATION REPORT

As articulated in a media release issued by the National HIV and AIDS Information and Training Centre, Eswatini has set a target of ending AIDS eight years earlier than the global timeframe, this as part of His Majesty King Mswati III's vision of 'A First World Eswatini by 2022'. Recent evidence indicates that the country is on the right trajectory to reach this target:

- Swaziland (sic) HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS) 2 reported that the massive scale-up of prevention interventions, HIV testing and treatment had slashed the rate of new infections (HIV Incidence) by 44 percent
- 94 percent of HIV-positive mothers receive HIV treatment to prevent transmission of the virus to their children during pregnancy and childbirth
- The country had also reduced AIDS-related deaths by more than 50 percent, with 70 percent

of those living with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART), and retention of people on treatment after one-year standing at 93 percent – one of the highest retention rates in the world

- HIV incidence among adults aged 15 years and older was 1.36 percent – 1.70 percent among females and 1.02 percent among males. Among adults 18-49 years, HIV incidence was almost halved, to 1.39 percent
- The percentage of all HIV-positive adults with viral load suppression (VLS), an indication that the infection is under control, was 73.1 percent, with 76.0 among females and 67.6 percent among males. The VLS was estimated using all people living with HIV as a denominator, regardless of knowing their HIV status or use of antiretroviral drugs. Among all HIV-positive adults aged 18-49 years, twice as many (71.3 percent) were virally suppressed in SHIMS 2 as compared to SHIMS 1 (34.8 percent)

These results indicated that Eswatini had made substantial progress towards achieving all three of the 90-90-90 global targets set by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UN-AIDS).

The country is however still faced with major challenges, none more concerning than the fact that – even with the HIV prevalence stabilised at 27 percent in people aged 15-49 years – HIV prevalence remains high. National survey data shows that adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) face significantly greater risk of HIV than their male peers, with young women aged 20-24 years being five times more likely to be infected than young men of the same age – 20.9 percent compared to 4.2 percent. One in every five young women 20-24 years is HIV-positive, increasing to one in every three for women 25-30 years.

HIV Response to intensify efforts to address key populations' issues:

- HIV prevalence among adolescents and young people is an indicator of new infections acquired rather than a survival effect of the treatment programme. Evidence also shows that most HIV infections in Eswatini are transmitted heterosexually, although risk factors vary.



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- In AGYW, sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs, transgender people and prisoners are disproportionately affected by HIV.
- Key populations are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection due to their high-risk sexual behaviour and higher internal and external stigma and discrimination, which constitutes a major barrier to their service uptake. HIV prevalence among female sex workers (FSW) is estimated at 60.5 percent, while prevalence among MSM is 12.6 percent.
- On the other hand, prevalence of syphilis among MSM was 1.2 percent, and 6.6 percent among FSW. Gender inequalities, differential access to services, and sexual violence, increase women's vulnerability to HIV, especially younger women who are biologically more susceptible.

In responding to issues of these key affected populations, the country is intensifying efforts to address human rights and gender-related barriers to service access, and to ensure appropriate focus on interventions that respond to them. The response has taken a more location- and population-specific prevention approach, and aims to provide tailored and differentiating services for key and vulnerable populations in underserved and/or high-burden regions and Tinkhundla. This talks to a significantly enhanced focus on HIV prevention, including linkages to Sexual Reproductive Health and Gender Based Violence services, among adolescents and young people, especially highly vulnerable adolescent girls and young women. The success of this paradigm shift will however rely on all involved playing their part, starting with ensuring that each Liswati (in targeted key populations or not) recognises his/her HIV risks and accesses appropriate services to minimise their vulnerabilities or even completely remove them.

### ROAD USERS' FRIEND

Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund (SMVAF) is the instrument by which government compensates road-accident victims who have suffered bodily injuries or loss of support following the death of breadwinners. Its mission further includes collaborating with stakeholders in the prevention of

road-traffic accidents through implementing global best practices. As part of the means to achieve its vision of becoming the most effective, self-sustaining road-accident fund regionally, SMVAF regularly collaborates with its neighbouring peers as well as law-enforcement entities from within and beyond Eswatini's borders. Locally, SMVAF is renowned for its high-visibility presence at events that attract thousands of Emaswati and visitors from abroad: in addition to awareness-raising stalls, Fund personnel offer free breathalyser-tests and even 'designated-driver' services to ferry tourists back to their lodgings.

SMVAF recently sponsored a 'summit' on behalf of the Road Safety Council and aimed at addressing the challenge of devising effective interventions in the face of ever-increasing fatalities and injuries on the region's roads. The think-tank attracted a significant number of stakeholders from within Eswatini and beyond its borders, and was officially opened by the Minister of Public Works and Transport, who began by pointing out that annually, 1.3-million people die worldwide as the result of road accidents, which are now the leading cause of death among children and young adults aged 5 – 29. As most vehicular crashes are avoidable, he opined, it was unacceptable that they should threaten any country's future.

Shifting focus to Eswatini, the Minister said it was time that private vehicles also be regularly subjected to stringent checks and inspections, and that a determination should soon be made on what interval would be best for mandatory roadworthy tests. The kingdom was nonetheless moving on the right track, he observed, as the diverse range of entities scheduled to deliver presentations – the World Health Organization plus local and regional law-enforcement agencies, traffic departments, emergency services, NGOs, insurance companies and even breweries – was in line with the African Road Safety Charter. The latter was adopted by the African Union Commission Assembly in 2016 and seeks to establish a policy framework for road safety improvement in each country and Africa as a whole, and thereby drastically reduce the number traffic accidents.

### MALARIA

Finance Minister Rijkenberg in his 2022/23 Budget Speech said that the Administration wished to

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express appreciation to His Majesty for continued support of the national programme towards a malaria-free Eswatini. The Eswatini Malaria Elimination Fund is rooted in a launch by the King with a capital funding of E5-million: a Board to manage the Fund was subsequently established, followed by the Eswatini Malaria Elimination Scorecard. The resulting setup enables healthcare authorities to identify malaria hotspots with accuracy, and target them for complete eradication.

His Majesty King Mswati III was at the time of the Fund's birth the Chairperson of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, and he sought to mobilise resources to eliminate the disease in Eswatini, Southern African Development Community countries, and Africa as a whole. The King and President Macky Sall of Senegal had in 2019 initiated a continent-wide campaign known as 'Zero Malaria Starts With Me': endorsed by African Heads of State and Government, this 'war against malaria' promoted strong national ownership of anti-malaria initiatives across all sectors and all

levels of societies with its assertion that everyone has a role to play.

The campaign corresponded with Eswatini's existing goal of eliminating malaria in the kingdom by 2022, and a renewed call went out to politicians, public servants, the private sector, youth, chiefs and other traditional leaders - many of whom were in attendance at the launch - to stand up and individually declare that zero malaria starts with them. His Majesty once again emphasised that together, citizens can make Eswatini the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to eliminate malaria, and added that one important step towards ensuring that outcome would be to provide enough resources for a sustained campaign against malaria in the kingdom.

He pointed out that Eswatini faced a US\$5.5-million (E80-million) budget gap to eliminate malaria, then urged everyone to protect those at risk and respond to each case in a timely manner: this included monitoring cases that cross the borders, a means

to avoid risking the progress already made. Fast-forward to the launch of the first national end malaria fund, the King explained that it will exist to mobilise the necessary resources to close the funding gap and ensure that Eswatini eliminates malaria by 2022, then prevents the reintroduction of the disease thereafter. He furthermore described it as a public-private partnership comprising representatives of the public and private sectors, as well as those of communities.

Following significant achievements by the kingdom, the World Health Organization classified the country as 'ready for malaria elimination', and for the country to qualify for malaria elimination, robust systems have been put in place. These include:

- Free malaria treatment in all health facilities, including those run by the private sector
- All households in malaria-risk areas are sprayed annually with residual insecticides, and a spray-coverage area of up to 90 percent is consistently maintained
- Government distributes bed-nets to all populations living in malaria-prone areas, with a special focus on pregnant women and children younger than five years
- A surveillance system maps out all confirmed malaria cases and all interventions delivered in each household, thus helping to provide full understanding of the malaria situation

Eswatini has invested a significant amount of resources in the area of research to ensure that the strategic direction of the programme is always informed by scientific evidence: this includes ongoing appraisal of the efficacy of the drugs and insecticides being utilised. The kingdom has established and strengthened its collaboration with neighbouring South Africa and Mozambique through the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative to address the issue of cross-border transmission. His Majesty described investment in cross-border collaboration as critical, since "mosquitoes and parasites do not respect borders or boundaries".

Implementation of the abovementioned interventions would not have been possible had it not been for the commitment shown by government fronting up to 70 percent of resources for the implementation of

malaria elimination interventions. The recent World Malaria Report was however an alarm bell, as it indicated that the progress made against malaria is stalling, and the resources available for malaria are at risk. The report was also a call to action, that progress needs to be accelerated, especially at national and regional levels.

The launch of the End Malaria Fund was therefore regarded as marking a significant milestone in the fight against malaria for Eswatini and the whole of Africa, progressing towards "eliminating malaria in this lifetime". His Majesty King Mswati III pointed out that government had thus far spent substantial sums of money fighting malaria, and it was now "time for us to unite and declare zero tolerance in the war on malaria...we have to work together as African nations to eliminate this challenge which has deprived us of many of our beloved friends and relatives".

The King concluded by disclosing that the Fund will be managed in perpetuity by a Board of Directors which "must effectively contribute to the implementation of priority national initiatives just like government, the private sector and other stakeholders have done. The primary focus and function of the Board will be overseeing the elimination of malaria in Eswatini...I urge its members to work with diligence".





# EDUCATION & TRAINING

***When the Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, in his 2022/23 Budget Speech announced an allocation to the Ministry of Education and Training of E3.53-billion to cater for all educational and training programmes, he pointed out to Parliament and the nation that “if we were to add to this figure the Orphans and Vulnerable Children grants and scholarships, which also support education and training, it grows to E4.05-billion, which is approximately 16 percent of the total national budget and places the Kingdom of Eswatini in the top 10 percent of education spending in Sub-Saharan Africa. With this huge investment made by tax-payers, we challenge educators and learners to ensure that Emaswati reap correspondingly significant rewards”.***

The Minister continued the Budget Speech by declaring that government has demonstrated its commitment to turning around the economy to achieve macro-fiscal stability and growth through the Strategic Roadmap, accompanied by improvements in human capital development. Recognising the importance of human capital as a contributor to economic growth, he said, government has received support from the World Bank for a Human Capital Project that is geared towards holistic child-development, improving learning outcomes for school-going children, and adequately preparing adolescents and the youth to become globally

competitive and productive citizens.

Rijkenberg highlighted how the kingdom had entered 2022 with an additional 100 public schools in locales all over the country benefiting from government's rollout of the Grade Zero programme: the latter was said to have been further bolstered by support received through UNICEF in mapping Early Childhood Care and Development Education, the main objective being to obtain a broad understanding of the current state of Early Childhood Care centres.

Free Primary Education (FPE) – also referred to as ‘State-funded education’ – was introduced in all of

Eswatini's public primary schools a little more than a decade ago. The Finance Minister in his 2022/23 Budget Speech referred to the FPE initiative as being viewed as a “consolidated programme, aimed at creating a conducive environment that features minimum barriers to access and quality education”. He asserted that FPE has been instrumental in addressing some of the barriers to access to schooling, and that primary school enrollment rates have increased from 72 percent in 2007 to 94 percent currently. Rijkenberg detailed how, under the FPE programme, government introduced a Personal ID Number for every pupil in order to control overspending on fees, but conceded that the processing of FPE payments remains manual and cumbersome: he gave an assurance that government is exploring ways to improve the system and migrate to electronic processes.

The Minister disclosed that in 2022, government is planning to introduce the Qualification Beyond Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education which aims to improve the entry requirement at university-level education. He spoke of how, in countries such as Zimbabwe and Ghana, the entry requirement at university is the A-level, while in the kingdom it remains the EGCSE. The new programme will introduce the four years of EGCSE at 28 identified schools in the country, commencing in 2022 and rolled-out to other schools in subsequent years. Upon completion of the four years, the first batch of students will then proceed to the A-Level. This programme will provide a range of disciplines beyond science, including business studies and humanities. The Minister also revealed that as an adjunct, government allocated an additional E30-million towards the e-Learning initiative.

Rijkenberg then disclosed to Parliament and nation that the audit for right-sizing the Teaching Service in all public schools regarding school quotas had been completed: the outcome was that a total of 761 teachers are being redeployed, and he was confident of the exercise achieving its main objective, that being to ensure that schools are manned by the appropriate staff in terms of both numbers and qualifications. Also completed was the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Enhancement Project which, through support from

the Republic of China-Taiwan, benefited Eswatini College of Technology (ESCOT) and Gwamile Vocational Training Institute Matsapha (VOCTIM). The Finance Minister concluded his remarks on the Education and Training sector by asserting that “government continues to improve and expand infrastructure provisions, both in schools and tertiary institutions”: regarding the former, he listed the construction of 169 new classrooms, 49 staff houses and hand-washing facilities in many primary and secondary schools – plus the rehabilitation of 99 structures countrywide – while the tertiary level, the rehabilitation of Emlaladini, VOCTIM and ESCOT was said to be ongoing.

## ROYAL PLAUDITS

The annual graduation ceremony at Ngwane Teachers' Training College as often as not sees His Majesty King Mswati III deliver the keynote address in his near-customary role as Guest of Honour. Most recently, he began by commending teachers' good work, and requesting them to continue in that vein because ultimately it benefits the entire country. The King said that teachers were making the country proud, which made them role models for pupils but in turn also brought the responsibility of knowing that whatever they do, the pupils will emulate. Everyone was a product of teachers, the monarch continued, hence teaching was a profession that should be respected. With several members of the royal family in attendance, along with the Prime Minister, various Cabinet Ministers and MPs, the 315 graduates were advised to be exemplary ambassadors for the college, wherever they were posted.

His Majesty described the ceremony as “a special occasion honouring a human resource that is key to driving our nation-building objectives through quality education...we are looking forward to seeing you play your part in building the next generation”. He urged the new teachers to remember the importance of their role, as the future of the country lies in the hands of the young people who constitute a significant portion of the total national population: “Be ready to shape the youths and guide them to be independent...help see to it that the country achieves all its goals. For this to happen, teachers should constantly seek to increase their knowledge, be of good character, creative, innovative, have

high motivation and be effective in their classroom strategies."

### TERTIARY ARENA

The University of Eswatini (UNESWA) was established in 1982: its declared vision is 'Leadership Through Excellence in Education', while its mission is to achieve excellence in teaching and learning, research and research-training, community service and the provision of opportunities for consultancy, professional leadership and enterprise development in the contemporary context. UNESWA declares that its mission shall be achieved through:

- providing education opportunities at undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- establishing new academic programmes designed to meet the emerging needs of society
- conducting a regular review of the academic programmes to make them demand-driven to stakeholders
- creating continuing education opportunities for reinforcing a culture of lifelong learning
- generating, disseminating and preserving knowledge through research, stakeholders' participation and development of an institutional repository
- teaching that encourages participation of students in entrepreneurship endeavours
- accounting to stakeholders that fosters efficient utilisation of resources
- coordinating and monitoring performance among all employees, and periodic evaluation and review of activities
- providing an excellent working and learning environment for staff and students

The UNESWA Foundation works to secure independent financial resources by engaging stakeholders and interested parties in strategic partnerships and thereby ease the financial burden on government.

UNESWA's expertise is availed to students via seven faculties spread over three separately-located campus facilities: the Agriculture Faculty is situated

near the country's research station at Malkerns and its home is Luyengo Campus, formerly the Agricultural College and University Centre; Kwaluseni Campus near Manzini houses the Faculties of Commerce, Education, Humanities, Science and Social Science; Mbabane Campus – formerly the Institute of Health Sciences – constitutes the university's Faculty of Health Sciences. There are also two institutes, covering Distance Learning and Postgraduate Studies, respectively.

UNESWA offers degree courses within the Arts, Sciences, Law, Education and Commerce, along with diploma-level Business Management, Accounting and Marketing courses. UNESWA affiliates include the Academic Development Centre, the Centre for Community Services, the Consultancy and Training Centre, the ICT Centre, the UNESWA Health, Information and Counselling Centre, the UNESWA Research Centre, the University Planning Centre and the Eswatini Institute of Research in Traditional Medicine, Medicinal and Indigenous Food Plants.

The Institute of Distance Learning caters for the study needs of those students who are unable to undertake full-time campus attendance. Medicine, Architecture and Engineering are among the degrees for which Emaswati must currently travel beyond the country to qualify. The Institute of Postgraduate Studies has a mission to maintain academic excellence and development through teaching, research and community service in all the disciplines offered at postgraduate level. It also strives to retain relevance in responding to the needs of human resources development locally, regionally and internationally.

UNESWA Library offers print and electronic resources in line with its mission to provide efficient service and access to quality academic information. The print side includes more than 180 000 monographs and current subscriptions to more than 300 journals, along with back issues to more than 600 journals. Collections are categorised into general lending, reference materials, journals, law, health science and agricultural science, with an additional special collection comprising Swatiana, SADC, World Bank, African Development Bank, IMF and UN agencies. Electronic resources are comprised primarily of EBSCOhost Online, SABINET Online and CD-ROM

databases, plus free- and open-access electronic resources.

### NEW GENERATION

Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) – founded 1991 and headquartered in Malaysia – is billboarded as the "World's Most Globalised University, with students from more than 165 countries studying in 13 campuses across three continents". It offers five levels of study –Foundation, Diploma, Professional Diploma, Degree, Postgraduate – and a choice of 21 Industries and/or Fields. LUCT Eswatini opened in 2011 at Sidwashini, near Mbabane: based on the parent institution's tenet that "every country is different, with dissimilar priorities, and education must therefore play its part in ensuring that the next generation of a country receives learning that will prepare it adequately to participate in building the economy of that country," the local campus set out to be a seat of education where "our Swati students will be able to acquire industry-relevant skills in addition to learning that emphasises creativity, talent-development and leadership qualities".

LUCT Eswatini is thus inspired by the kingdom's striving to attain Developed Nation status, as articulated in Vision 2022 as a blueprint for the country's concerted efforts to revamp and accelerate the development of its human resources. Coined by His Majesty King Mswati III, Vision 2022 sits at the core of the country's goal to create a sustainable economy and improve its world standing in human development. According to LUCT's analysis, the kingdom's traditionally agriculture- and manufacturing-reliant economy "must embrace a new age of technological innovation and spur the growth of knowledge-based industries within the country, and thereby create new opportunities previously unavailable".

Key areas requiring attention – as identified by the institution – include the need to build the nation's capacity for innovation and competitive participation in the globalised economy. It was therefore deemed imperative that the nation builds its human capital in a manner that will enable it to venture successfully into the production of goods and services, while simultaneously addressing poverty issues by

empowering its next generation to take advantage of opportunities now arising globally in the area of new technologies and creative content creation.

LUCT Eswatini's declared mission is "to transform Emaswati into confident, skilled, techno-savvy individuals who can contribute to build Eswatini's economy by expanding it with new industries that are increasingly being managed by young people with the digital skills to operate a global business from their laptops...Limkokwing has the flexibility to build entrepreneurial skills through an exciting, stimulating campus environment purposefully built to stimulate creativity and innovation". As a proffered strategy whereby to face the challenges it faces, "Eswatini must consolidate its limited human capital resources and transform them into unlimited sources of power to move forward, for in today's world education is not just about getting the right qualifications, it is also about developing appropriate talents of an individual".

LUCT acknowledged the responsibility of ensuring that its students are given every opportunity to acquire the best possible academic qualifications, as well as develop their talents through special projects as extracurricular involvement that will build their confidence. The institution opined that the next phase of Eswatini's growth can be shaped by today's generation of Emaswati who "must grab the golden opportunity to acquire the best of 21st century education and professional skills, and so transform the kingdom into a beacon of light on the African continent". To quote from its prospectus: "Limkokwing University focuses on creativity and innovation to equip students with leadership and entrepreneurial skills to develop new businesses. Today, thousands of Limkokwing graduates are playing active roles in many important aspects of nation-building in their home countries. Here is your opportunity to acquire an internationally recognised qualification at one of the world's most innovative institutions of higher education."

### WESLEYAN HERITAGE

Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU), launched in 2010, is a product of the merger of three renowned colleges of education, health and theology, which are now Faculties with corresponding

Departments:

- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Theology

SANU is part of a network of 53 colleges, universities and seminaries in 35 countries on six continents.

Locally, the institution offers:

- Bachelor of Education in Leadership and Management of Special and Inclusive Education: a three-year programme intended for Principals and Deputy Principals or those who are being prepared for those positions and wish to incorporate children with special needs
- Bachelor of Education in Special and Inclusive Education: a three-year programme intended for teachers who wish to enhance their skills in the area of special needs
- Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Sciences: a four-year, fulltime programme designed to educate and train Medical Laboratory professionals to proficiently conduct testing in a clinical laboratory setting
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Midwifery: a four-year programme designed to prepare competent, self-directed nurses and midwives to provide holistic care and quality health services to meet the changing needs of society
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing Anaesthesia: designed to equip students with advanced scientific knowledge and a comprehensive array of clinical experience that meets the standards of anaesthesia practice
- Bachelor of Theology: prepares men and women for service in the church by equipping them intellectually, socially and spiritually
- Post-Diploma Certificate in Midwifery Nursing Sciences: a specialised programme with a focus on midwifery practice
- Primary Teachers Diploma: a three-year programme focusing on preparing teachers who will be competent in teaching at primary school level

- Diploma in Theology: designed to enrich students' understanding of theological and biblical truth and enable them to communicate with confidence and integrity
- Diploma in Pharmacy: designed to give students a firm foundation in pharmacology, patient-care, drug-delivery systems and more

### COMPLEMENTARY VALUES

Eswatini Medical Christian University (EMCU) – established in 2010 by the Seoul-based Africa Continent Mission – continues in its striving to boast an internationally recognised Faculty of Medicine: the latter's infrastructure currently comprises lecture theatres and a laboratory, while the number of healthcare-related courses on offer has passed the 100 mark. As EMCU is linked to Chungnam University and Chungnam National University Hospital, both located in Daejeon, South Korea, its resident academic staff-tally is frequently bolstered by the arrival from South Korea of additional, highly qualified doctors and nurses with experience in lecturing.

Institution founder, Rev Chong Yang Kim, said during his most recent visit to the kingdom that EMCU's determination to offer exceptional learning opportunities for students at degree level had resulted in an enrolment-escalation of at least 100 students per year: he declared that he was thus both optimistic and enthusiastic about the evolving medical sphere in Eswatini. EMCU's declared mission is to realise a system of preventative healthcare that offers education programmes for both medical professionals and Emaswati. The first institution of its kind in the country, its roster of degree courses in the Allied Healthcare Sciences currently comprises Bachelor of Medicine, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Science, Radiography, Psychology, Nursing Science, Computer Science, Social Work, Fine Arts and Theology.

The institution has over the years regularly extended its campus by constructing additional lecture theatres and laboratory facilities, brought to over 100 the number of healthcare-related courses on offer, bolstered the academic staff-tally by seconding experts from the organization's headquarters in South Korea, and furthermore brought teams of specialists to the kingdom to impart knowledge

and give hands-on assistance in EMCU-run clinics. EMCU's declared objective in Eswatini is to realise a system of preventative healthcare that offers education programmes for both medical professionals and citizens. The pioneering vision behind EMCU was the establishment of a medical university, as evidenced by the conferring of Bachelor's degrees in Nursing, Pharmacy, Psychology and Medical Laboratory Sciences, as well as Diploma in Radiography.

### COMPREHENSIVE

Gwamile Vocational Training Institute Matsapha (VOCTIM) offers certificate and diploma courses in various disciplines: they respond to market demand and thereby fill the gap created by Eswatini having more university-eligible school-leavers each year than available admissions. Gwamile VOCTIM recently added Automotive Diagnosis to its Automotive Engineering Department, and Motor Control to its Electrical Engineering Department.

Eswatini College of Technology (ESCOT) is in a bid to attain university status and meet the requirements of its sister institution in South Africa, namely the Vaal University of Technology. ESCOT currently offers Bachelor of Technology degrees in Tourism Management, Information Technology and Human Resource Management, as well as diplomas in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Building Studies, Design & Technology, Automotive, Hospitality Studies and Secretarial Studies.

The Institute of Development Management (IDM) is a regional organization in Eswatini, Botswana and Lesotho, and which strives to meet requirements within the public, parastatal and private sectors through development-orientated activities that include training, consultancy, research, and the establishment of a Management Resource Centre. IDM serves to enhance managerial knowledge and skills, provide training and consultancy, refine organizational structures including administrative and management procedures, expand the database available to decision-makers, and extend public awareness of all aspects of development.

The International Development Centre for Africa serves to build the capacity of individuals and

organizations through training, consultancy and management- development services. Specialist fields include Agriculture and Environment Sciences, Economics and Trade, Finance and Accounting, Gender and Participatory, Health Services Delivery, Human Resources/PR, IT, Logistics and Procurement, Management Development, Management of Information Systems, Project Management and Secretarial Administration.

Lwati Training Institute offers a comprehensive range of courses for middle and senior managers, as well as for supervisory-level staff. Modular courses are tailored to meet the requirements of a single client or group. The Management Services arm offers specialised consultancy services that include collective bargaining, organizational analysis and restructuring, terms and conditions of service, job evaluation and grading, institutional strengthening, recruitment and selection, strategic planning, corporate planning, financial services, counselling, conferences and seminars.

### MANANGA CENTRE FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT OFFERS

Executive Management Development programmes including Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction, Environment and Sustainable Development, and Health Management; Accredited diploma and degree courses focusing on developing leaders and professionals in the areas of Innovation and Technology, Business and Development Studies; Graduate courses aimed at leaders, captains of industry and champions of development in the business, civil society and public sectors; Courses at Master's level, including Master's in Leadership and Change Management, Business Administration and Strategic Management.

A range of institutions that serve the education, healthcare, technical, commercial and agricultural sectors are to be found in Eswatini's two cities and main towns. These include the Ngwane Park Youth Training Centre, the National Handicraft Training Centre, the Emlaladini Development Centre, the College of Nursing, the Manzini Industrial Training Centre, the School of Appropriate Farm Technology and the Nhlanguano Agricultural Skills Training Centre.

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## Population

1.1 million, according to the Eswatini Population and Housing Census of 2017, and announced in Parliament on 1 March 2018: the outcome reflected an increase of almost 75 000 persons (0.7 percent) in the preceding decade. Of the country's four official regions, Manzini is the most populous, followed closely by Hhohho. Three quarters of Emaswati live in rural surrounds.

## Language

English and SiSwati are the official languages, with the former most widely used in business and commerce.

## Religion

Majority Christian, plus indigenous beliefs and small representations of other major world faiths.

## Climate

Eswatini's predominant summer rainfall season between October and March is characterised by occasional heavy downpours.

Highveld: Humid near-temperate with approx 140 cm mean average rainfall. Midwinter (July) temperatures known to fall as low as -3° C.

Middleveld: Subtropical, drier with approx 85 cm mean average rainfall.

Lubombo Plateau: Also subtropical with similar rainfall statistic.

Lowveld: Almost-tropical sub-humid with approx 60 cm mean average rainfall. Midsummer (January) temperatures known to reach 42° C.

## Average Temperatures

Midsummer (January)  
Mbabane 25° C  
Manzini 30° C  
Autumn (April-May)  
Mbabane 20° C  
Manzini 25° C  
Midwinter (July)  
Mbabane 15° C  
Manzini 20° C  
Spring (Sept-Oct)  
Mbabane 22° C  
Manzini 25° C

## Entry Details

All visitors require a valid passport; some nationalities require visas.

Customs Formalities: Residents of South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana are required to furnish statistical information regarding goods which originate in those countries but are not being brought in for sale. Standard customs formalities apply to other visitors. Duty-free allowances per person: 400 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 250g tobacco, 1l alcoholic beverage, 100 ml perfume. A married couple travelling together is in regard to duty-free allowances considered one person. Road tax for foreign-registered vehicles entering Eswatini is E50 – the equivalent of R50 in South African currency – payable at the customs point.

Air Travel: Eswatini Airlink is the national carrier and operates regular scheduled flights connecting major regional and central African cities to the kingdom. King Mswati III International Airport, 45 km from Manzini and 80 km from Mbabane, is the focal point of operations that conveniently time many outbound flights to meet global long-haul connections. Airport shuttle buses stop in Mbabane, Ezulwini, Matsapha and Manzini.

## Public Holidays

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 January      | New Year's Day              |
| 19 April       | King's Birthday             |
| 19 April       | Good Friday                 |
| 22 April       | Easter Monday               |
| 25 April       | National Flag Day           |
| 1 May          | Labour Day                  |
| 30 May         | Ascension Day               |
| 22 July        | King Sobhuza II's Birthday  |
| Aug/Sept (tba) | Umhlanga Reed Dance         |
| 6 September    | Somhlolo (Independence) Day |
| 25 December    | Christmas Day               |
| 26 December    | Boxing Day                  |
| Dec/Jan (tba)  | Incwala Day                 |

## Government/useful contacts - 00268

|                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| King's Office, Lobamba     | 2510 1082     |
| Parliament Offices         | 2416 2410     |
| Prime Minister's Office    | 2404 2251/2/3 |
| Agriculture & Cooperatives | 2404 2731     |
| Central Bank of Eswatini   | 2408 1000     |
| Commerce, Industry & Trade | 2404 3201     |
| Economic Planning & Dev.   | 2404 3765/6/7 |
| Education and Training     | 2404 2491     |
| Finance                    | 2404 8145     |

|                                          |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Foreign Affairs                          | 2404 2661/2/3 |
| Health & Social Welfare                  | 2404 2431     |
| Home Affairs                             | 2404 2941/2   |
| Housing & Urban Dev.                     | 2404 1741     |
| Information, Communications & Technology | 2405 4000     |
| Justice and Constitutional Affairs       | 2404 6010     |
| Natural Resources & Energy               | 2404 6244/5/6 |
| Public Service                           | 2404 4438     |
| Public Works & Transport                 | 2409 9000     |
| SEDCO                                    | 2404 3046     |
| SIDC                                     | 2404 3391     |
| EIPA                                     | 2404 0470/4   |
| Eswatini Revenue Authority               | 2406 4000     |
| Eswatini Tourism Authority               | 2404 9675/93  |
| Eswatini Tourist Office                  | 2404 2531     |
| Tourism & Environmental Affairs          | 2404 6420     |
| International Organisations              |               |
| European Union                           | 2404 2908     |
| ESAMI                                    | 2404 8494     |
| FAO                                      | 2404 7220     |
| UNDP                                     | 2404 2301     |
| UNICEF                                   | 2407 1000     |
| World Food Programme                     | 2404 4962     |
| World Health Organisation WHO            | 2404 2928     |
| Professional Organisations               |               |
| Federation of Swaziland Employers        | 2404 0768     |
| Eswatini Chamber of Commerce             | 2404 4408     |
| Eswatini Institute of Accountants        | 2404 5566     |
| Diplomatic Representatives               |               |
| Embassy of United States of America      | 2404 6441     |
| Embassy of Republic of China (Taiwan)    | 2404 2379     |
| South African High Commission            | 2404 4651     |
| Republic of Mocambique                   |               |
| High Commission                          | 2404 3700     |
| British Honorary Consulate               | 2404 3469     |
| Cyprus Consulate                         | 2404 2650     |
| Federal Republic of Germany              | 2404 3174     |
| Finland Honorary Consulate               | 2416 2912     |
| France Consulate                         | 2404 3667     |
| Indonesia Consulate                      | 2404 0606     |
| Italy Consulate                          | 2404 4371     |
| Portugal Consulate                       | 2404 6780     |
| Embassy of Qatar                         | 2416 1580     |
| Royal Danish/Norwegian Consulate         | 2404 3547     |
| Seychelles Consulate                     | 2505 2415     |
| South Korea Consulate                    | 2404 6379     |

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# asd medical

adding value to life

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## ABOUT ASD MEDICAL

asd medical was established on the 4th June 2007 and registered under the Company Act of Swaziland as a private company.

## BACKGROUND

When the company was formed the market was dominated by foreign owned companies. asd medical's registration as a supplier of pharmaceuticals, surgicals, lab-re-agents, specialised ICU supplies, capital hospital equipment and consumables filled this gap.

## MISSION

To be the chosen supplier of high quality hospital supplies with an excellent delivery record and high customer satisfaction.

## VISION

To create sustainable growth relationships with our clients through progressive service and support.

## COMPANY VALUES

asd medical subscribes to values and principles that distinguish it as a leading provider of high-quality hospital supplies.

- **INTEGRITY** - Integrity is the pillar of the management and operation of our company. The virtue of integrity is not only a principle that governs the company, but it is also a way of life for every employee of asd medical.
- **HONESTY** - While honesty has become a scarce commodity in business practice, asd medical wants to be known for this virtue. The company strives to be honest in all its dealings with all stakeholders. We want to remain honest in our pricing, promises and delivery timelines.
- **RESPECT** - Respect is a hand glove with which we handle all our customers and clients at asd medical. The culture of respect that is full of 'buntu' is a common element in all our business interactions in the company.
- **RESPONSE** - At asd medical we believe in listening to our clients. However, we do not just listen, but we also provide the necessary response to their needs and complaints. That is why we have a full back-up service that responds to customer needs.
- **FRIENDLY** - People of the Kingdom of Eswatini are known to be friendly people and that is what asd medical tries to resemble. The company is not just friendly to people, but also to the environment.



Ventilator at Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital's ICU unit



X-ray at Mbabane Government Hospital



Incubator at Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital



AU 680 Chemistry Analyser installed at National Referral Laboratory (Mbabane Government Hospital)



Pharmaceuticals and disposables at asd warehouse in Matsapha

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