The Namibia Training Authority entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the international construction firm, Murray & Roberts on the 22nd of January 2015.

In essence, the agreement binds the two parties in the establishment and implementation of a regular job attachment and internship programme for Namibian trainees and trainers. Under this programme, trainees and trainers will be selected by the NTA from a wide range of construction-related fields of study, including Fitters and Turners; Welders; Boilermakers; Riggers; Bricklayers; Plumbers; and Electricians.

Trainees and trainers so selected are to be dispatched to Murray & Roberts construction sites, depending on the number of trainees or trainers the company can accommodate, field of study, duration of attachment and the location of placement.

On its part, Murray & Roberts is to ensure that the scope of attachment covers sufficient technical content and complexity, to meet course requirements. Murray & Roberts is also to make available qualified supervisors to evaluate the progress of the attached trainees and trainers.

Speaking at the event, the NTA’s Acting CEO, Ester Anna Nghipondoka bemoaned the lack of industry participation in opening up more meaningful job attachment opportunities. “Many companies take in trainees, but fail to deliver as far as on-the-job training and evaluation are concerned. Others continue to view our centres as substandard, despite these institutions conforming to quality assurance requirements”, she stressed.

Murray & Roberts Managing Director: Resources and Industrial and Electrical Control Systems, Mile Sofijanic, stressed the importance of collaboration in improving VET training.

“We are looking forward to giving full effect to the provisions of this agreement and in investing in trainees attached to our construction sites. We have two important projects in Namibia right now who both are fully supportive of the programme - One at Tsumeb with our partner Outotec, and another at Husab,” he stressed.
Since opening its doors in May 2011, the Eenhana Vocational Training Centre (EVTC) has established itself as a preferred provider of vocational and technical training services in the Ohangwena region, and beyond.

The centre’s status as a leading-edge training institution was once again affirmed when it was granted full accreditation status by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA), confirming its capacity to provide specified courses and assess the performance of trainees.

Approached for comment, EVTC Centre Manager, Hinandjoovo Muashekele (photo) could not hide his excitement. “Not only does our accreditation status reflect on the quality by which we conduct our business, it also brings a sense of public trust and assurance that our programmes meet nationally endorsed standards”, he said.

Muashekele also praised his predecessor, Daniel Ngodji (now the Deputy Head of the Loudima Technical Training Institute in Congo-Brazzaville), for his commitment in this regard. “I believe in giving credit where it is due. Mr Ngodji and the team did all the hard work. I came on board only recently and merely saw the process through”, he said.

Muashekele is also very optimistic about the centre’s future. “We embrace quality in all we do as we try to uplift our centre, our trainees and our community. We still have a lot to learn from established VET providers such as the Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT) and we continue to position ourselves in such a way that we draw from the best practice experiences of others”, he noted.

EVTC currently offers training in six occupational areas under the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) model. These are Bricklaying and Plastering; Information and Communication Technology; Joinery and Cabinetmaking; Office Administration; Plumbing and Pipefitting and Welding and Fabrication.

Two other Vocational Training Centres – Okakarara VTC and Nakayale VTC (Outapi), were also granted full accreditation status by the NQA in December 2014.

EENHANA VTC – A FULLY ACREDITED VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

SH: Who is Jimmy Dax away from the office?
A quiet, reserved and caring gentleman. I am an avid reader and enjoy horror fiction stories. I believe in a positive attitude, I thrive under minimal supervision, I am eager to learn. I am flexible, I work hard, I am organised.

SH: Tell us about your job at the Namibia Training Authority.
My job as an Assessment Coordinator within the Assessment and Certification Division is quite demanding, especially during times when we prepare for assessment rounds and when we conduct assessments and prepare results. It requires us to be thorough, diligent and trustworthy.

SH: What is your opinion of the NTA family?
I am not a new member to the NTA family as I joined Head Office recently from one of our vocational training centres where I served as a VET Trainer. We are indeed a strong team. The fact that one can engage with staff members on all levels creates a sense of belonging, appreciation and togetherness.

SH: Share with us that innermost desire/dream?
I am working very hard towards acquiring my own plot on which I can build my dream house and venture into small subsistence farming.

SH: Tell us that one secret no one knows?
There is a saying that goes ”What you see is what you get”. That’s me. I’m an open book. No secrets.

FROM THE CEO’S DESK

Greetings!

The year 2015 holds a lot of promise for the NTA as we continue our excellent progress towards realising our strategic objectives.

While the creation of meaningful job attachment opportunities for our trainees is but one such deliverable, there are simply not enough job attachment opportunities available in the local training market.

The NTA therefore considers the just-signed agreement with the international construction firm, Murray & Roberts as another big milestone. Not only does it free up meaningful attachment opportunities, but it also demonstrates that reputable companies have faith and confidence in our efforts to re-engineer our country’s Vocational Education and Training regime.

To this end, allow me to call upon all our industry partners to emulate Murray & Roberts and come on board as job attachment partners.

It is only through such partnerships that we can truly deliver a training regime relevant to the needs of our industry stakeholders.

Yours in Vocational Education and Training,
Ester Anna Nghipondoka
Media Statement:
Board of Directors on VET Levy Implementation Progress

Excellent progress has been made towards the full implementation of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Levy.

Verbatim below, a media statement issued by the NTA’s Board of Directors as an official progress update on the VET Levy implementation process.

1) Introduction

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 35 of the Vocational Education and Training Act (the VET Act) of 2008, the Minister of Education, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, and after consulting the NTA Board, imposed the VET Levy by way of a notice in the Government Gazette of 27th January 2014.

In terms of the notice, employers with an annual payroll of one million Namibia dollars, or more, were required to register as levy-paying employers with the Namibia Training Authority (NTA), within a period of 30 days after publication thereof. The implementation of the VET Levy subsequently commenced on 01st April 2014.

2) Registration and Collection

A total of 1,732 (one thousand seven hundred and thirty two) employers registered as VET Levy-paying employers at the end of the last financial year (2013/14). This number has since grown and stood at a total of 2,202 (two thousand two-hundred and two) employers at the end of December 2014.

As at the end of December 2014, a total of N$170,4m had been collected in levies. The estimated total levy to be collected for 2014/15 is approximately N$ 220.0 million.

3) Disbursement

As published in the Government Gazette on the 27th of January 2014, all levies collected by the NTA in a financial year are to be disbursed at the end of that particular financial year, in line with the following allocation:

- 35% for Key Priority Training Grants;
- Up to 50% for Employer Training Grants; and
- Up to 15% for the NTA’s Administration Costs.

3.1 Key Priority Training Grant Allocation

A number of immediate interim short-term interventions, in support of the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4) priority sectors have been identified, namely:

- 4.1.1 Agriculture;
- 4.1.2 Hospitality and Tourism;
- 4.1.3 Logistics; and
- 4.1.4 Manufacturing.

3.2 Employer Training Grant Allocation

Information on claims under this allocation will be disseminated before the end of the current financial year.

NOTE: Should any of the information above be in conflict with any provision(s) of the VET Act of 2008, the Notice for the Imposition of the VET Levy, or the Regulations Relating to the Use of Vocational and Training Levies, the VET Act and/or the Notice and/or the Regulations shall take precedence over the information contained in this statement.

END

Registration of Training Provider Sensitisation Roadshows

The NTA’s Quality Assurance Division is to embark on another round of regional sensitisation meetings over the next few weeks to create awareness about the requirements for training institutions offering Vocational Education and Training courses, to register as such with the NTA.

According to Quality Assurance Manager, Ian Gicheru (photo), the main objectives of the nationwide campaign are to create a platform to share information regarding the regulatory role of the NTA and to discuss the application process and potential support offered by the NTA. “We want to educate and inform providers of the potential legal implications they face should they not comply. At the same time we will also distribute copies of the regulations and application forms”, he said.

The roadshows are also to focus on informing stakeholders about those training providers currently registered with the NTA. “Although our primary target audiences is the training providers, both current and prospective, we are also targeting as a secondary audience, community leaders, regional education officers, principals, teachers, parents and learners to share with them the list of registered training providers for them to know where quality training opportunities exist”, Gicheru explained.

The campaign is one of the key deliverables in the 2014/15 Business Plan and the first region-by-region intervention by the Quality Assurance Division to create awareness amongst training providers, existing and prospective.

(See Page 4 for Sensitisation Roadshow Schedule)

Chairperson: Board of Directors Otto Nakasole Shikongo

NTA Manager - Quality Assurance: Ian Gicheru
The NTA and its implementing partner, Namibia Careers Expo (NCE), are making good progress towards the staging of the 2015 Skills Expo, which is to take place at the Ramatex Textile Factory from the 25th to the 27th of this month.

NTA Manager: PR, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement, Mornay Louw told The Stakeholder that the number of exhibitors who have registered for the event has picked up considerably since December, last year. “We are very happy with the response. A good number of training institutions and corporate entities have confirmed their participation and we look forward to an exciting three-day event”, he said.

The Skills Expo brings together on a shared platform, public and private registered training providers, corporate entities and other industry stakeholders to partner the NTA and the NCE in the promotion of technical and vocational careers and in countering perceptions stigmatising VET as “last choice education”. Significant emphasis is to be placed on having actual job practitioners on site and creating opportunities where visitors can directly engage them and gain first-hand knowledge about the various career options.

Louw urges principals and teachers in Windhoek and surrounding areas to encourage their more technically inclined learner cohorts, who might have a genuine interest in VET career options to attend and access information about technical and vocational career options.

Vocational and technical training institutions currently registered with the NTA, or accredited by the Namibia Qualifications Authority, are also encouraged to participate and to use the event as a platform to market their course offerings and training services.

According to Louw, the NTA and the NCE want to generate institutional experience in the staging of an event of such a magnitude and lay the groundwork for the staging of Namibia’s first national skills competition. “The NTA is making good progress towards the finalisation of a framework under which to organise from 2016 onwards, the staging of a national skills competition. We can then select talented VET trainees to represent our country at the international skills competition, WorldSkills. In fact, we are sending a select group of trainees to represent our country at the 2015 Sao Paulo WorldSkills competition in Brazil. We will also introduce them to the media and the public at the 2015 Skills Expo”, he said.

Interested skills-based businesses, associations, utilities, technical and vocational training institutions and corporate exhibitors can still register. They can contact the NTA’s PR and Marketing Officer, Roberta da Costa at 061-2078521, or rdacosta@nta.com.na for information.

In turn, Namibia Careers Expo can be contacted at 061 245 711, or info@skillsexponam.com Registration forms can be downloaded from the NTA’s corporate website through the following link under the ‘Downloads’ section. https://www.nta.com.na/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2015-Skills-Expo-Exhibitors-Registration-Form-Pack.pdf More information is also available on the official event website at www.skillsexponam.com
The former state-owned Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) under the NTA’s supervision, have over recent years made considerable progress towards establishing themselves as efficient and target-driven institutions, offering high quality vocational and technical training services.

Over the next seven editions, The Stakeholder is to carry a special focus on the leaders behind these institutions and the invaluable role they have played, and continue to play, in the transformation of their centres. In this edition, we profile the Centre Manager of the Zambezi Vocational Training Centre, Richard Kambinda.

**SH: Who is Richard Kambinda?**

I was born in the Zambezi region some 45 years ago. I attended primary school at Mulumba Primary and matriculated at Kizito College in 1992.

After matric, I registered for mechanical training at the then Academy’s College for Out-of-School Training (COST) in Komasdal where I did N1 to N6 Mechanical Training from 1993 to 1995.

In 1995, I was employed by De Beers Marine as a Marine Engineering Cadet Officer up to 1999, when I took up a position in Government in the then Ministry of Higher Education as a Vocational Instructor for Mathematics and Science. In 2002, I was promoted to the position of Chief Vocational Instructor, a position I held until November 2008, when I was promoted to the position of Centre Manager for the Zambezi Vocational Training Centre.

I also hold a National Technical Diploma in Mechanical Training and a Vocational Instructor Certificate. I have also completed a Management Development Programme (MDP) through the University of Stellenbosch Business School and I am currently studying towards a Master of Business Administration degree.

**SH: What challenges came with your appointment at ZVTC?**

My appointment coincided with the selection of ZVTC as a transformation pilot centre under which the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) curriculum was to be introduced. It was challenging indeed. We had to implement the CBET curriculum across all the occupational areas, whilst at the same time empowering and capacitating our trainers to become familiar with and competent in the new mode of training delivery.

The establishment of the NTA in 2008 also brought its own set of challenges. Job uncertainty led to a significant number of my trainers opting for greener pastures at the National Youth Service and I had to start recruiting from scratch. At the time, frequent demonstrations by trainees over meal allowances was the order of the day. We had to work hard to align our budget processes with that of our ‘pursemasters’, the Ministry of Education. Managing the change was difficult, but we had to address these concerns towards inculcating a culture of discipline, hard work and commitment amongst our trainees.

**SH: What is your biggest challenge today?**

I would say the expectation to manage a diverse group of people from different backgrounds towards working together as a team.

Teamwork, togetherness and commitment remain of utmost importance in carrying our centre into the future and maintaining its status as an important roleplayer in the empowerment of the people of Katima Mulilo and the wider Zambezi region.

**SH: What makes your job rewarding?**

The end product. Seeing technically inclined young people from different backgrounds grabbing the opportunity to excel in their training in a specific occupational area. Seeing them exiting the system equipped with skills that will open up many avenues in their lives. Seeing them succeeding in formal employment or as young and budding entrepreneurs.

**SH: What are your views on our country’s VET sector?**

The VET transition is ongoing and requires the full support and participation of all stakeholders, specifically our industries to allow us to establish a relevant VET regime for our country.

We have to embrace change as individuals, or as teams. We have to constantly ask ourselves what it is we can do to make our VET system better.

Our progress has been good and the NTA has made huge strides in taking up the mantle to steer the VET sector forward. Its introduction of the VET Levy will free up more resources to invest in growing the training market and in the creation of more high-quality and industry-driven training opportunities for our young people.

**SH: What is your message for our country’s VET trainers and trainees?**

VET trainers across our country should learn to value themselves as agents of change. They should appreciate that their commitment and dedication bring change to the lives of those they train. They should keep the passion burning and train our trainees to reach for the stars.

In turn, our trainees should embrace the challenge to become job creators, and not job seekers. And that will require them to be persistent, creative, resourceful and innovative.

**LEADING BY EXAMPLE:**

ZVTC Manager during a Safety Demonstration in front of his office.
Meanwhile, the NTA has readvertised a public tender under which it seeks to appoint a Strategic Plan Implementation Partner, as an initial tender process towards the end of 2014 did not yield the intended results.

According to Beukes, it is anticipated for the implementation partner to support the management team in identifying specific areas in the NTA’s Strategic and Business Plans for the rendering of the envisaged strategic support.

It is anticipated that the implementation partner will initially be engaged for a period of one year with the option to extend, depending on the quality of services rendered.

Beukes looks forward to the appointment of the implementation partner. “To have a Strategic Plan is one thing – to give full effect to what is envisioned thereunder, is another. Only through concerted and determined implementation can the NTA fulfill its strategic mandate to achieve an effective and sustainable national system of skills formation”, he stressed.

Interested parties experienced in the areas of Strategy Development and Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Management and Education and Training have until the 23rd of February 2015 to buy the tender documents and submit their proposals.

The Technical Committee of the Board of Directors, as well as the Standards, Assessment and Certification Council and the Industry Skills Committees are to gather at the Safari Hotel and Conference Centre from the 10th to the 11th of this month.

The main purpose of the meeting is to apprise the relevant committees of critical information pertaining to the operations of the NTA, and to facilitate the development of annual work plans for such committees.

Chief Operations Officer, Jerry Beukes (photo), told The Stakeholder that the meeting will also evaluate the functioning of the committees with a view to identify improvement measures, whilst emphasis is also to be placed on updating committee members on progress made with the implementation of the NTA’s Strategic Plan.

“We hope that through this process, we will be able to create a shared understanding of activities planned for the next financial year”, Beukes stressed.

“We are eagerly looking forward to the full participation of our committee members. It is an opportunity for the NTA to solicit their input on revisions to the current Strategic Plan, towards ensuring a five-year rolling plan”, he added.

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The NTA has started with the development of websites for the seven formerly state-owned Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), currently under its supervision.

According to the Manager: PR, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement, Mornay Louw (photo), the step is in line with key expectations under the Strategic Plan to support effective engagement and communication between the NTA and its stakeholders.

“In keeping pace with the thrust to improve the corporate visibility of the VTCs, the NTA anticipates the new websites to not only serve as a formal communication channel and source of information to inform trainees, trainers and other stakeholders about activities, projects and accomplishments at the VTCs, but to also facilitate easy and convenient access to information”, Louw said. “It is a no-brainer really! Whereas websites were once a domain reserved primarily for large corporations and online businesses, the increasing ubiquity of the internet access makes it important for our training institutions to also have a web presence”, he said.

Louw further states that training will be provided to VTC staff to allow them to administer the websites themselves. “This is an important consideration. The internet has completely changed the way we communicate and today it is all about immediate and fast access to information. We want to put our VTCs in the driving seat and empower them to take the lead in using the websites as a primary platform from which to improve on their current communication and engagement practices”, he noted.

Another important consideration is the utilisation of the websites and the online tools that promote them as the focal point of all advertising and marketing for the VTCs. “We plan to implement a wide range of marketing activities during the next financial year aimed at rebranding the VTCs as reliable and reputable training institutions and the new websites would be an excellent focal point to support these activities”, Louw highlighted.

The NTA has approached local service provider, PC Centre, who has been responsible for the development of its own recently revamped corporate website to spearhead the process. Under the Terms of Reference, the developers are to hand over sites that will allow easy access to information and facilitate stakeholder interaction through various channels such as email, discussion boards and social media.

Liaison and administrative support staff from the various VTCs attended a workshop at Tsumeb in the Oshikoto region earlier this month to start with the crafting and development of website templates and content. It is anticipated for the seven websites to be operational by the end of April, this year.

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