

South Africa's W&RSeta signs collaborative MoU with Namibia Training Authority

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSeta) and the Namibia Training Authority (NTA) have renewed their existing relationship by signing a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enabling both parties to enhance their skills planning through collaborative research, shared experiences and skills development activities of mutual interest.



Muvatera Ndjoze-Siririka, acting CEO of NTA with Tom Mkhwanazi, CEO of W&RSETA, at the signing of the MoU in Johannesburg on 24 February.
Source: Supplied

W&RSeta has been facilitating education and skills development in South Africa's third-largest contributor to gross domestic product (GDP) – the Wholesale and Retail Sector – for more than 20 years.

Namibia's NTA was established in 2008 with a view to regulating and facilitating the sustainable delivery of quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) to the benefit of stakeholders.

Plugging a gap

W&RSeta CEO, Tom Mkhwanazi, says the partnership between the two countries was born out of a cross-border quality assurance issue that arose in 2019. "Retailer trainers, who were traveling to Namibia to conduct training, encountered challenges due to the lack of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreement between the countries around quality assurance and certification."

“We realised South Africa and Namibia could benefit from a collaborative relationship in all areas of skills development. This is especially the case because Namibia mirrors our skills development legislation and post-schooling training interventions closely, making it a logical fit for both countries,” he adds.

The relationship has matured over the past three years, notwithstanding delays as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The signing of the agreement will formalise the process and provide opportunities for the two bodies and retailers in both countries to collaborate moving forward. The sector in both countries, like all other sectors, was impacted by the global Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in job losses, but also opportunities to expand through technological advancements, particularly in e-commerce.

The two training bodies met in Johannesburg last week for the signing of the MoU.

During the course of their time in South Africa, the delegation from the NTA visited some of the W&RSeta's flagship projects and initiatives, such as the W&RSeta Sekhukhune Skills Development Centre in Limpopo, the Indlela Trade Testing Centre in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training in Olifantsfontein, Gauteng, and other institutions of learning including the False Bay TVET college and Northlink TVET College.

Members of the NTA also engaged with key stakeholders from some of Africa's biggest retailers on skills development matters such as employer partnerships with Woolworths and the recognition of prior learning models with the Shoprite Group.



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“Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) holds the key to technological progress, rapid industrialisation, wealth creation and poverty reduction,” says acting COO of the NTA, Tobias Nambala.

“Therefore, investing in TVET is capitalising in national socio-economic development. Effective governance models for TVET involve relevant local stakeholders and business associations and in particular, close partnership between TVET institutions and the world of work through public-private partnerships (PPP).”

“Hence, it cannot be overemphasised that this partnership is important for the development of a high-quality TVET through mutual engagement and support, because it will foster regular communication, sharing of ideas on best practices as well as enabling the provision of technical and financial support between the NTA and the W&RSETA,” Nambala concludes.

Implementation plan

The signing of the MOU was also an opportunity for both parties to agree on an implementation plan to be drafted in the next few months and rolled out over the next five years.

Some of the key areas of the partnership include collaborative research; education and training projects; sharing expertise, specifically technical expertise; collaboration around curricular design and materials assessment and other quality assurance practices; exploring opportunities in the digital space in terms of e-learning; sharing IP and other capital resources; and sharing experiences.

Another potential area for collaboration exists around the sharing of employer space. This relates to integrated learning in the workplace, with the idea of forming a worker exchange programme.

Mkhwanazi says the signing of the MOU marks a new and exciting phase in the relationship between W&RSeta and NTA.

“Our respective retail sectors are similar and I believe both parties can benefit from a collaborative approach to conduct joint projects and enhance skills transference and training programme implementation in the sector.”

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