

Government's Strategy that seeks to create viable economic regional participation to be boosted

Government's efforts of making the West Coast economically viable will receive a boost when President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma launches the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) and handover the operator permit on Thursday, 31 October 2013 at Saldanha Bay in the Western Cape Province.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Rob Davies, says beside the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) project, the whole West Coast Fishing Cluster initiative has been supported with more than R11m through the Co-operatives Incentives Scheme of the Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**). He says the West Coast Fishing Cluster initiative forms part of the Regional Industrial Development Plan that seeks to create viable economic regional participation.

"the dti has been involved in facilitating the commercialisation of small-scale fisheries through a Cluster Development Programme to enhance the economic activity of the small industries along the strategic value chain in the Western Cape since 2010. The overall objective of the cluster development programme is to ensure that small business are given opportunities to participate in the value chain of the fishing industry, particularly where such communities are heavily reliant on fishing for their livelihood", added Davies.

According to Minister Davies, government has identified cooperatives as a drive for job creation and that more jobs have been created from the fishing cluster initiative, and that with more activities around the fishing community 2000 jobs can emanate from this drive.

Minister Davies indicated that the Saldanha Bay IDZ will enhance the government's initiative that seeks to create viable economic regional participation, as the feasibility study has revealed that this IDZ has an immense potential of taking the economy of the South Africa and the West Coast region to a higher industrial growth path.

"According to the study, the project has the potential to make a contribution of 86 percent to the Gross Geographic Product and create approximately 11,975 total (direct, indirect and induced) jobs; additionally the Saldanha Bay IDZ is likely to attract foreign direct investment worth approximately R9.3 billion over 25 years.", Davies said.

Davies added that the study also revealed that Saldanha Bay is strategically located to serve the large Oil & Gas sector on the African continent due to an increasing number of oil rigs requiring maintenance, and their traffic flow passing by the West Coast to the East Coast of Africa. Furthermore, this will provides a great opportunity for components manufacturing that will support the oil and gas industry.

The Oil and Gas sector is one of the priority sectors in terms of Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and it is believed that the Saldanha Bay IDZ will be a useful policy tool to advance the objectives of IPAP, New Growth Path (NGP) and National Development Plan (NDP)

The Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) is one of the 18 strategic integrated projects (SIPs) of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC).