

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE IN THE EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, NKANGALA DISTRICT, 12 – 16 MARCH 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (the Legislature) has a responsibility in terms of Section 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (the Constitution) to facilitate public involvement in its legislative and other processes. Sections 114 and 133 of the Constitution, read with Rule 131 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (the Rules) directs the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable for the exercising of powers and performance of their functions. Therefore, the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (the Committee) regularly conducts public hearings and oversight visits to projects of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (the department) and other projects; in the various municipalities of the Province.

2. PURPOSE OF THE “TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE” PROJECT (TLP)

The purpose of the TLP is to reach out to the communities and to enable the people to have access to the Legislature, especially people who are living in deep rural areas. The Legislature seeks to hear the voice of the people and to ascertain whether provincial government delivers services effectively and efficiently within the respective municipalities.

3. OBSERVATION BY THE COMMITTEE

The area administered by the Municipality encompasses a variety of land uses and settlement types, which includes large and smaller commercial farming enterprises. Agriculture is still one of the major contributors to the development of the area's income and the emerging farmer support programmes need to be focused on in order to sustain and grow the industry. The department renders a number of services in the municipality through its programmes which include Farmer Support Services; Sustainable Resource Management; Veterinary Support; Research and Technology Development Services;

Agricultural Economic Services; Structured Agricultural Education and Training as well as Rural Development Coordination and Environmental Affairs.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE VISITS

The following objectives shaped the oversight visits to the projects of the department:

- To evaluate the progress made on projects reflected in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) implemented by the department. The Legislature seeks to ascertain whether provincial government delivers services effectively and efficiently within the respective municipalities.
- To determine the extent to which public funds are efficiently, economically and effectively used by the department in the implementation of its projects;
- To interact with project beneficiaries in order to hear their concerns.
- To fast track service delivery of core services to the communities within the municipality in which the department has funded projects.

5. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP, the research section conducted pre-site visits to the Municipality. Comprehensive research reports were compiled that informed the Committee's programme for the oversight visits.

On the 14 March 2018, the Committee met with the HOD, officials from the department and project beneficiaries at Moniwa and PATPET Agricultural Cooperatives.

A joint public hearing of the Economic and Social Cluster Committees was conducted at Sy Mthimunye Stadium on the 15 March 2018.

The Committee also participated in the Business Stakeholder Engagement on the 15 March 2018 at the eMalahleni Local Municipality, Council Chamber.

6. OVERSIGHT ON GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROJECTS

6.1. MONIWA PROJECT

6.1.1. Project background

The farmer accessed the land through the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in 2011. The farm size is measured at 1546.8761 hectares whereby the farm is used for animal and crop production.

Village name and ward	Kleinwater, ward 29
Type of project	Livestock and crop production
Date of project inception	2011
Number of hectares	1546.8761
Number of beneficiaries	2
Farm ownership	PLAS

6.1.2. Support provided by the department

Livestock Production

The department supported the farmer with thirty (30) pregnant Nguni cows and one (1) bull during the 2013/14 financial year through the Masibuyele Esibayeni Program. The present stock is seventy five (75) cows. The project receives advises and technical support on a regular basis on livestock management and record control.

Crop production

The farmer specializes with white maize and soya beans. Presently, maize is planted on three hundred and eighty eight (388) hectares and Soya beans at two hundred and eighty (280) hacters. With the income generated on the farm, the farmer manages to buy implements and production inputs. The farmer has also leased sixty eight (68) hacters where twenty (20) hacters of maize and forty eight (48) soya beans have been planted.

6.1.3. Project impact in the community

Sixteen (16) permanent jobs have been created on the farm. The farmer supports community members during bereavement with donation of maize meal and meat. Smallholder farmers are assisted with advice and mechanization. The farmer is selling

young bulls to local farmers for breeding purposes. A farmer's day was held in the farm in November 2017, aimed to encourage other farmers to start practicing the no till system.

6.1.4. Other Stakeholders involved in the project

- Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR)– land allocation and administration
- Nooitgedacht Research Centre – livestock improvement
- Agriculture Research Council (ARC) – Livestock improvement
- AFGRI – marketing and crop support

6.1.5. Interaction during the TLP oversight visit

a. The Chairperson of the Cooperative raised the following:

- He appreciated the support provided by the extension officers of the department in the project.
- He raised a concern that departmental tractors are always not in a good working condition and he has to fix the tractors on his own.
- This has a negative effect on the performance of the project and other farmers in the municipality. Furthermore, the farmer reported more tractors are needed for the farm to operate effectively.
- The farmer was then advised to start practicing a no till farming system, to save on diesel for mechanization.
- The farmer took a crop insurance which assisted him during hail storm crop damage.

b. The Committee deliberated as follows:

- The Committee appreciated the work done by the project in ploughing back to the community and requested the farmer to consider involving young people into the project.
- The Committee enquired whether there was an established market for the project. The farmer reported that he markets his crops at OTK near Bronkhorstspuit. He also sells his crops at the local market and members of the community that walk in to buy.

- A concern that the department was not adequately communicating its work to communities was raised by the Committee. The Committee urged the department to strengthen its communication and ensure that achievements of the department are communicated to the public.
- The Committee enquired if the project was affected during the 2015 drought season and to what extent was the project affected. In response, the farmer reported that the project was affected by the drought. However, because he had insured his crops, he was able to claim from the insurance.

6.1.6. FINDINGS

The Committee made the following findings:

- a. There is no fence to keep the livestock from eating crops.
- b. The department is not adequately informing members of the community of its activities.
- c. Departmental tractors provided in the project are always not in good working condition.
- d. Veterinary support in the project is lacking.
- e. The farmer provides advise and mechanization to smallholder farmers.
- f. Two graduates were accommodated for two years in the farm for practical training.

6.1.7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

- a. The department must provide the project with a fence to keep the livestock from eating crops.
- b. The department must develop a booklet informing members of the public of its activities.
- c. The department must address the concerns related to tractors break down as this is a common challenge affecting farmers in the municipality. In addition, the department must ensure that farmers are provided with tractors that are in a good working condition.

- d. The department must strengthen its veterinary support to the project and ensure that the health program on the cattle is performed on a regular basis.
- e. The department must ensure that the farm is used as an incubator farm that assists smallholder farmers.
- f. The department must encourage the farmer to involve more young young people in the farm.

6.2. PATPET PRIMARY CO-OPERATIVE

6.2.1. Project background

The farmer accessed the land privately through Landbank funding in the year of 2006. The farm size is measured at eighty (80) hacters whereby the farm is used for crop and animal production.

Village name and ward	Kromdraai, ward 29
Farm ownership	Private
Source funding	DARDLEA through Phezukomkhono program, Mechanization and production input
Activities	Mixed Farming Livestock production (cattle and goats) Grain crop production (maize and vegetables)
Number of hectares	80 ha
Number of beneficiaries	10

6.2.2. Support provided by the department

The cooperative has planted six (6) hacters of yellow maize and one (1) hacter of vegetables through the Phezukomkhono program. There are seventy one (71) cattle and forty nine (49) goats in the farm. The co-operative receives mechanization support for crop production and production inputs. Members of the cooperative attend a vegetable production study group conducted by the department and other stakeholders. The department has installed a solar system and generators for irrigation purposes.

6.2.3. Market

- The cooperative sells green mealies to local vendors and the remaining maize is taken to AFGRI for storage where members of the cooperative get mealie meal for own consumption.
- The vegetables are sold at Spar in eMalahleni and to local vendors.
- The project will register to supply vegetables to the Government Nutrition Programme.

6.2.4. Stakeholders involved in the project

- The Department of Water Affairs supplied the project with three (3) JoJo tanks.
- PANNAR supplies the project with seeds.

6.2.5. Interaction during the TLP oversight visit

a. The Chairperson of the Cooperative reported that:

- The cooperative acquired a loan of **R377 000.00** from Nedbank and used it to buy the plot.
- A concern was raised that the Kromdraai Mine has opened a dam with acidic water that joins the stream that flows through the farm which is utilized to water the vegetables and that has affected the production.
- Tractors are all broken down and this delays the planting process.

b. Members of the Committee raised that:

- The Committee enquired if the department had plans in place to support the project to grow. The department reported that there are plans in place to support the project in the 2018/19 financial year. The Committee requested the department to meet with the project beneficiaries and make a list of all the concerns that need to be addressed.
- The Committee requested the regional director to ensure that projects in the district are equally supported by officials of the department.

6.2.6. FINDINGS

The Committee made the following findings:

- a. The project will register to supply vegetables to the Government Nutrition Programme.
- b. Tractors that are provided to the project are all broken down and this delays the planting process.
- c. Kromdraai Mine has opened a dam with acidic water that joins the stream that flows through the farm which is utilized to water the vegetables

6.2.7. RECOMMENDATIONS

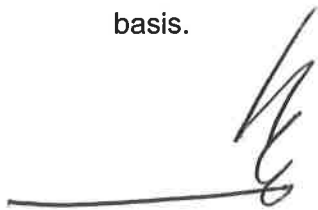
The Committee recommends that:

- a. The department must strengthen its support to the project and ensure that the project has the capacity to supply vegetables to the Government Nutrition Programme.
- b. The department must supply the project with tractors that are in a good working condition.
- c. The department must together with the Department of Water Affairs meet with Kromdraai Mine and resolve the issue of the dam with acidic water flowing through the farm.

7. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Hon BD Dube, extends his appreciation to Members of the Committee, the MEC, HOD and departmental officials, all stakeholders and the support staff of the Legislature for their participation during this oversight visit to the community of the eMalahleni Local Municipality, in enhancing the oversight role of the Legislature. The Portfolio Committee tables this report to the House for adoption with its recommendations.

Unless otherwise stated, the department should provide progress reports on all issues raised to the relevant Portfolio Committee by **30 June 2018** and thereafter on quarterly basis.



HON. BD DUBE (MPL)

26/04/2018

DATE

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**