

# North West art of Pitching Masterclass



The Minister for Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, convened the art of Pitching Masterclasses, PITCH FOR FUNDING COMPETITION, North West Province on Thursday, 12 September 2023.

Ideas are generated daily, and some carry on being worth millions, if not billions of Rand while others may not even get off the ground. Small businesses generate lots of ideas, but they may not find the platform to share their ideas with others.

As part of the promotion of the various funding instruments within the DSBD portfolio, DSBD, Seda and Sefa are collaborating to provide pitching opportunities to accelerate access to funding. Seda was requested to take the lead in organising masterclasses and pitching sessions in all the 9 provinces to ensure entrepreneurs have access to funding. The general SMEs support means provision of investment readiness interventions such as idea packaging, market validation, and route to market strategies, financial planning, and growth plan through Seda tools. Seda support also means nonfinancial support such as mentorship, market access, financial management and control systems, Human resource management, production management and control interventions etc.

“Pitching” is a way of affording a small business an opportunity to test their idea to find if the idea is acceptable and can attract investment. It offers an enabling environment for ideas to gain momentum and be realised. The main aim of pitching an idea is to generate interest from the targeted group.

“Mock pitching” is the process of evaluating a pitch and providing assistance to refine a pitch through constructive criticism and feedback for improvement. There are various opportunities where a SMME can pitch their idea, either to a funder for possible investment or for an incubator to find if they are suitable to be incubatees of a particular incubation sector. Effectively, every day in business is a pitch for sales!

Pitching Master classes were conducted prior to every pitch for funding competition session and its aim is to provide SMMEs with professional tools on how to present business cases effectively and efficiently, in persuasive pitches to potential funders, improving access to market, technology and finance.

Mr Sipho Ngcai, Executive Manager: Seda Technology Programme, gave a purpose of the event where he stated that the process of evaluating a pitch and providing assistance to refine a pitch through constructive criticism and feedback for improvement. There are various opportunities where a SMME can pitch their idea, either to a funder for possible investment or for an incubator to find if they are suitable to be incubatees of a particular incubation sector. Effectively, every day in business is a pitch for sales.



Ms. Chuma Magini who led the masterclass enlightened the candidates who had to pitch their businesses that, Pitchers will be selected from the group. During a pitching session one entrepreneur at a time get 3 minutes to explain what his/her business does and what funding is required. Entrepreneurs will be briefed about outcomes once the judges have taken time to make decision. "Loan is temporary. The relationship ends when the debt is repaid. The lender does not have any say in how the owner runs his business so If you are not ready for funding you will be referred to the nearest Seda Branch where you will be assisted and provided with appropriate interventions to ensure that you are ready to submit an application to Seda or DSBD or pitch when an opportunity arise," said Ms. Magini.

"Taking on too much debt makes the business more likely to have problems meeting loan payments if cash flow declines. Investors will also see the company as a higher risk and be reluctant to make additional equity investments." Ms. Magini added.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams made emphasis on the importance of simplifying processes for small businesses to thrive. "It is equally important for us as the government to design the support instruments based on what we see in the ground. It is our responsibility to create a conducive environment for small businesses to succeed. It is of paramount importance to indicate that entrepreneurs take interest on the development of policies that governs their business operations as this will improve both the work of government and business," said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Mr Sabelo Ntshangase, Seda provincial manager gave a vote of thanks where he said, "I want to congratulate all of you who took a decision to start, because this takes courage to come and pitch in front of the judges and all the best for future, continue with great work on your businesses," Mr Ntshangase.

