

ACTION



Nokulunga Mngqeta CEO

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In supporting the objective of the Amathole District Municipality to facilitate Local Economic Development in the district, ASPIRE has developed a new five-year strategic plan aimed at stimulating the rural economy through agriculture, heritage & tourism, and small town regeneration. Initiatives in these three areas are implemented in the various corridors within the Amathole region. The focus of the strategy is on empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities to ensure that they play a role in the economy of the region.

ASPIRE AIMS TO BE THE FORCE FOR CHANGE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC GOALS:

- A good and effective service orientated organisation.
- Economically thriving small towns and rural communities.
- Rural community clusters.
- The preferred investment and development partner.

Although the first six months of the 2013/2014 financial year were productive, the funding constraints remained a chal-

lenge. As a result, management strengthened the risk management system and developed a funding model with a clear funding strategy. These efforts have proven to be effective as substantial funding was secured within a short space of time. The development of a three year business plan ensured that the agency has adopted an integrated planning approach and medium term planning is adopted.

A change management process was implemented to ensure that all employees are on board with the changes that were implemented in the agency particularly the new strategy. The implementation of the agricultural strategy was strengthened through the appointment of a Project Manager with a background in agriculture.

In attempting to reduce poverty ASPIRE also focuses on implementing sustainable food security projects with the aim of these projects eventually becoming commercialised, thereby uplifting the communities involved in these initiatives.

New to tourism & heritage, ASPIRE is partnering with key stakeholders in the tourism strategy and hopes to identify a gap to which its tour-

ism and heritage goal can make a valuable contribution. It is our conviction to make a positive change in the lives of the people of Amathole district and through our efforts we managed to secure R37.5m from the Department of Environmental Affairs's Natural Resource Management program. Through this programme, ASPIRE will be able to create jobs, improve the flow of water in the main catchment areas of the ADM whilst also rehabilitating natural resources for optimum potential of our natural resources. This initiative focuses on skills development and targets women, youth and people with disabilities.

ASPIRE will continue to implement infrastructure projects in small towns in an effort to unlock their economic potential and the development of industries linked to these infrastructure initiatives. The priority towns for 2014/15 are Willowvale and Elliotdale.

ASPIRE in ACTION is the first in a series of newsletters aimed at keeping you informed and assisting you in your role as a partner in **the force for change** - stimulating economic development of the Amathole region.

ASPIRE VISION

The catalyst for economic development

ASPIRE MISSION

To promote and implement sustainable spatial economic development in the Amathole district

ASPIRE VALUES

INTEGRITY

- Ethical behaviour, no corruption, capital stewardship, honesty

UBUNTU

- Dignity and respect for each other, communities, environment, diversity and culture
- People first (Batho Pele)

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Professionalism, inclusivity and transparency
- Responsibility

PASSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Pro poor
- Selflessness

PROGRAMME UPDATE



AGRICULTURE

Ndakana Household Gardens and Blueberry Outgrowers Programme

The Ndakana Household Agro-Ecological Support Cooperative continues to grow from strength to strength. It has managed to increase its membership to 100 locals from 5 villages. The development of a seedling nursery commenced recently which will be utilised to support the members to continue their gardens for each growing season. The second season of the Blueberries Programme has resulted in five times projected yield. It is our plan to ensure that the Blueberries reach the formal markets in the next season.

AGRICULTURE

Aquaculture with DAFF in Hamburg

An agreement is being negotiated with DAFF for the implementation of a fisheries project at Hamburg. The value of this project is R5.5m and the signing of the agreement is imminent.



TOURISM & HERITAGE

Removal of alien invasive plants

ASPIRE has been appointed as an implementer for two Expanded Public Works Project to be implemented, namely a Natural Resource Management project to a value of R37m over a period of 3 Years, and a R10m "Adopt a spot" project in the BCM. In both projects, ASPIRE will receive 7% implementers fees. The R37m project is intended for job creation whilst also improving catchment and stream flows.

SMALL TOWN REGENERATION

Stutterheim Regeneration

The launch of Mlungisi Community Commercial Park (MCCP) on 22 February 2014 was a much celebrated event and earmarked the completion of construction and of tenants moving into the centre. MCCP represents a unique space for economic development and investment into Stutterheim and the district as a whole. Businesses that will operate here include a clothing store, cellphone store, two ATMs, a furniture store, a hair-salon, a fresh food and meat outlet, a hardware store, a supermarket and restaurants. Replication of this type of development in other municipalities will ensure that the rural communities have access to such services.

MARKETING MATTERS

In an effort to ensure maximum visibility of the ASPIRE brand and our goals and objectives, various marketing tools have been developed and distributed. These include a corporate profile and folder, as well as various promotional items. A new website, aligned to the new five year strategic plan, is under development. This will also add significant value to our brand and marketing. The ASPIRE 2012/2013 Annual Report was concluded and distributed in December 2013.

ASPIRE in ACTION, a quarterly newsletter, forms part of our marketing and communications strategy as effective communication is key to ASPIRE's success in stimulating economic development in the Amathole District.



STAKEHOLDER MATTERS

GIZ LEADERSHIP

A visit by GIZ leadership in February is a clear indication of their continued commitment to support ASPIRE

ENTERPRISE ILEMBE

An MOU was signed with Enterprise Ilembe to ensure that we are able to share experiences.

CORPORATE NEWS:

PEOPLE PROFILES



Project Manager: Mpilo Mlomzale

DATE JOINED: 11 December 2013

COMPANY PROFILE:

My Key responsibilities are Identification, Fund-raising and Implementation of Rural Economic Development Projects.

Reporting to: Chief Operations Officer

PERSONAL PROFILE: I'm single.



Company Secretary: Zamela Kiviet

DATE JOINED: 1 December 2013

COMPANY PROFILE:

ASPIRE is an opportunity for my personal development. In a small organisation like this you get involved in many areas and therefore enhancing your knowledge. Before I joined ASPIRE I was working as a Company Secretary for a National Government Entity which was established and operates differently from ASPIRE as a local government entity. There is a huge difference when it comes to compliance issues and that is one of my key responsibilities.

Reporting to: CEO operationally and accountable to the Board.

PERSONAL PROFILE:

I'm single, no kids. I enjoy my workout and running on the road. Going on holiday gets me so excited.



Finance Manager: Namhla Cekiso

DATE JOINED: 1 December 2013

COMPANY PROFILE:

I joined ASPIRE to be part of team that contributes positively to previously disadvantaged communities. My Key responsibilities are to support the chief financial officer to deliver on ASPIRE's mandate and to ensure adherence to laws and regulation pertaining to finance.

Reporting to: Chief Financial Officer.

PERSONAL PROFILE: I'm married.

MAKE CONTACT & JOIN THE FORCE FOR CHANGE

Please join **the force for change** by contributing to this newsletter. We welcome your news and views regarding the economic development of our region, your comments on this issue and what you would like to see in future issues.

For contributions and/or enquiries contact Sandra Weppelman at info@aspire.co.za or call 043 721 2070.