



FDC
Free State Development Corporation
Growing the Free State

FDC INSIGHT

2025/2026

2nd Edition

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ABOUT US

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) is the official economic development agency for the Free State Province, established in terms of the FDC Act No.6 of 1995. The agency focuses on four activities in order to achieve growth and development, service to SMME's, export related assistance and property management.

VISION

To drive economic growth and development in the Free State Province .

MISSION

To provide financial and business support services to SMME's; development and management of properties as well as to facilitate and promote investments and exports in the Free State

OUR SERVICES:



**Enterprise
Development**



**Trade &
Investment**



**Property
Management**



**Export
Promotion**

VALUES

**Ownership | Passion | Teamwork | Integrity |
Accountability | Agility and Transformation.**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition comes at an exciting time for the Free State Development Corporation (FDC). We recently welcomed Dr. M.G Nokwequ as our Acting Chief Executive Officer, and under his leadership, we continue to focus on driving inclusive economic growth across the province.

In this issue, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of women entrepreneurs in the Free State as part of Women's Month and highlight our commitment to empowering women in business. As we move into Heritage Month, we take pride in showcasing how FDC is supporting initiatives that preserve our cultural heritage while unlocking opportunities that strengthen the local economy.

Through these stories, we aim to keep you informed, inspired, and connected to the work FDC is doing to transform the Free State's economic landscape.

**Enjoy the read,
Marketing and Communication Team**



DR M.G NOKWEQU
(FDC ACTING CEO)

Welcoming Our Acting Chief Executive Officer: Dr. M. G. Nokwequ

The Board of Directors and the entire FDC team are pleased to formally welcome Dr. M. G. Nokwequ as the Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Dr. Nokwequ is a familiar and highly respected figure within the corporation, bringing years of invaluable experience and a deep institutional understanding of the FDC mission. As the HOD of Desteza, Dr. Nokwequ has been central to the execution of our most critical projects and is uniquely positioned to guide the FDC through this period.

His appointment ensures continuity of leadership and a steady hand in advancing the Corporation's mandate to reiterate FDC's core mandate. Dr. Nokwequ is committed to maintaining the momentum we have built and ensuring that we remain focused on delivering value to our stakeholders.

We look forward to working closely with Dr. Nokwequ as he leads the FDC into the next phase of our strategic journey.



FDC Strategic Session: Driving Transformation for the Free State

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) embarked on a pivotal two-day strategic session on 13 and 14 August 2025, marking a decisive step in repositioning itself as the premier developmental agency of the Free State Province.

Day 1 was highlighted by the keynote address from the MEC for DESTE, Honourable Toto Makume, who stressed the importance of introspection, reform, and the review of the FDC Act of 1995 to ensure it remains relevant in driving the corporation's mandate. This call for reform reflects FDC's commitment to growth, accountability, and alignment with strategic objectives to drive economic growth and development in the province.

Key stakeholders in attendance included the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), Chairperson of the Free State Advisory Council, Dr Dan Mosia and the Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone (MAPSEZ). The discussions centred on strengthening the FDC's role in promoting the Free State as a preferred business and investment destination, developing sustainable SMMEs, and facilitating private sector investment. This formed part of a broader reputational revamp focused on transparency, stakeholder engagement, and excellence in service delivery.



FDC Strategic Session: Driving Transformation for the Free State

DAY 2

Day 2 focused on collaborative problem-solving. Board members and management were divided into smaller working groups tasked with identifying solutions to the challenges discussed on Day 1.

The group discussions produced:

Clear identification of key challenges

- Practical recommendations and action steps
- Identification of required resources and potential partners

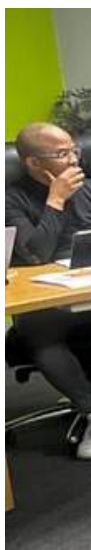
Each group presented its findings, which were further refined through constructive feedback and discussion. This interactive approach fostered stronger teamwork between the Board and management and resulted in a comprehensive plan to address pressing issues.



"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

-Henry Ford

03



FDC Acting CEO Meets with Management to Drive Organisational Renewal

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) Acting CEO, Dr. Nokweu, convened a strategic meeting with the Executive Management Team (EMT) at the FDC Head Office in Bloemfontein yesterday, 20th August 2025.

The meeting addressed key issues raised during the recent Board Strategy Session, focusing on developing robust business processes to drive organisational renewal.

This proactive initiative reinforces the FDC's commitment to continuous improvement, paving the way for a more efficient, effective, and sustainable organisation



04

FDC Engages with ABSA to Explore opportunities for collaboration

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) hosted a stakeholder meet and greet session with ABSA on Wednesday, 10 September 2025, at the FDC Boardroom in Bloemfontein.

Led by the Acting Chief Executive Officer (ACEO), Dr. Nokwequ, the meeting aimed to explore opportunities for collaboration and leverage ABSA's various programs to drive economic growth in the province.

Key discussion points included:

- Refurbishment and enhancement of FDC properties to attract more clients
- Support for Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the region

The FDC is committed to fostering strategic partnerships to stimulate economic development and job creation in the Free State province.



Photo caption: Dr. Nokwequ, ACEO of FDC, engages with ABSA representatives during the stakeholder meet and greet session.

TEXTILE CLUSTER BUSINESS BREAKFAST HELD IN QWAQWA

A recent business breakfast held in Phuthaditjhaba marked a significant milestone in efforts to revitalize the textile industry in the region. This collaborative initiative between DESTEA, the Free State Development Corporation (FDC), and the Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality aims to revitalize the textile sector, support township economies and stimulate sustainable job creation.

The Phuthaditjhaba Industrial Park serves as a platform to attract investment, foster innovation, and create jobs. The introduction of the Textile Manufacturing Cluster Committee marks a turning point for industrial development in the Free State.



Phuthaditjhaba, once a thriving textile hub, has faced significant challenges, including deindustrialization, youth unemployment, and economic stagnation. The cluster seeks to reverse this trajectory by uniting manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.



This initiative aligns with the Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSGDS), which aims to expand the manufacturing sector's contribution to provincial GDP. The textiles subsector is crucial for absorbing unemployed youth, especially women and young people from previously marginalized communities.

The Textile Cluster Business Breakfast drew key stakeholders, including local textile entrepreneurs, SMMEs, municipal leadership, and FDC representatives. MEC Makume emphasized the importance of unity, resilience, and cooperative development, shifting away from individualistic business practices. This initiative marks a significant step towards revitalizing the textile industry in QwaQwa, creating jobs, and stimulating economic growth.

DEPUTY MINISTER SEISO MOHAI VISITS BOTSHABELO INDUSTRIAL PARK



Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr. Seiso Mohai, and the Premier of the Free State, Ms. MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, recently conducted an interactive site visit to the Botshabelo Industrial Park. This visit marked the beginning of a series of youth-focused activities, culminating in the Mangaung Youth Expo which was recently held at Simson Sefuthi Hall in Botshabelo.

Speaking at the Botshabelo Digital Hub, Deputy Minister Mohai emphasized the importance of enabling youth access to high-impact economic sectors, such as manufacturing. He stressed that young people must be active drivers of economic growth and development, rather than peripheral participants.

Deputy Minister Mohai also acknowledged the critical role of the Free State Development Corporation (FDC) in supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The FDC's efforts to promote economic growth and development in the Free State province were recognized as vital to empowering young people and driving economic innovation.

Day two of the visit, the Mangaung Youth Expo provided a platform for young people to engage meaningfully in shaping a future where they lead societal change and drive economic innovation. The event afforded FDC an opportunity to share their products and services, amongst others were the NYDA, MAPSEZ, the DIGITAL HUB, and Government Departments

DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE LEAD A CLEANING CAMPAIGN IN BLOEMFONTEIN



The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) recently participated in an exhibition at Heidedal in Bloemfontein, which was part of the Deputy President's visit to the area. The main goal of the event was to encourage communities and stakeholders to get involved in initiatives that promote cleaning and greening, such as waste management, infrastructure repairs, and tree planting.

The FDC's participation in the exhibition was likely aimed at showcasing their support for sustainable urban development and their commitment to partnering with government, private sector, and residents to achieve this goal. As an organization, the FDC plays a crucial role in promoting economic growth and development in the Free State province

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL OVERSIGHT VISITS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER PINKY KEKANA – BOTSHABELO INDUSTRIAL PARK



Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana led an oversight visit to the Botshabelo Industrial Park, September 18, 2025, as part of the 2025 Integrated Public Service Month. The visit aimed to inspect various service delivery points in the Mangaung metropolitan area.

Joining Deputy Minister Kekana were notable figures, including:

- Hon. MEC Toto Makume
- Executive Mayor of MMM Cllr Gregory Ntatisi
- FDC ACEO, Dr. M Nokwequ
- FDC Board Chairperson , Mr Neo Masithela
- Acting District Manager of Mangaung. Mr. Thabiso Tshabalala

This visit demonstrates the government's commitment to monitoring and improving service delivery in the Mangaung metropolitan area



Free State SMMEs Shine at 2025 Professional Beauty Expo

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism in the Free State in collaboration with the Free State Development Corporation (FDC) exposed five (5) small businesses from Bethlehem, Ficksburg Bloemfontein and Welkom within the cosmetics sector at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand for a 2-day showcasing.

The five companies produce products such as haircare, facial and body oils and bodycreams. The objective of the exposure is to promote the province and various economic sectors it offers. Furthermore to create market access and linkage with identified stakeholders and specialists within the sectors.

The 2025 Professional Beauty Expo, which a two day show from 31 August - 01 September 2025 aims to bring together business owners, industry leaders, government, capital providers and industry experts to explore opportunities as they unpack challenges and find solutions for growth across the cosmetics and beauty sectors.



Available at the show are live demonstrations, breakaway sessions, live hair trends, latest products demonstrations. Barber connect which showcases and live sessions on the latest equipment, exhibitions and awards.

Day 1 resulted positively with interest shown in the southern part of the African Continent and beyond namely Zimbabwe, Botswana, India and South Africa. Companies were able to also make sales on the first, looking forward to the second and last day of the expo.

Beneficiaries/Exhibitors

Name: Mbalenhle Hadebe
Company Name: Nkanyezi Botanics

Name: Lehlohonolo Malia
Company Name: Serakanolo

Name: Rito Madingana
Company Name: Earthly by Rito

Name: Moleboheng kgoboso Setlaba
Company Name: ZiziRebirth

Free State SMMEs Beauty Expo Gallery



Beneficiaries/Exhibitors

Name: Mbalenhle Hadebe
Company Name: Nkanyezi Botanics

Name: Lehlohonolo Malia
Company Name: Serakanolo

Name: Rito Madingana
Company Name: Earthly by Rito

Name: Moleboheng kgoboso Setlaba
Company Name: ZiziRebirth

Jewellex Africa 2025 Exhibition

Destea in collaboration with FDC took 5 businesses to the Jewellex Africa 2025 exhibition held in Johannesburg. This strategic initiative was designed to boost market access for local jewellery design talent and provide them with a premier industry platform. The five artisanal businesses showcased their unique, locally crafted collections to a vast network of international buyers and industry leaders. The exposure gained is crucial for securing valuable contracts, generating new leads, and ultimately accelerating the growth of the creative economy in the Free State.



FDC Empowers Local Entrepreneurs at SALGA Business Support Programme

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) proudly joined forces with key partners at the SALGA Small and Medium Business Support Programme on 14 August 2025 at the Indaba Auditorium, Mangaung Metro Municipality.

Our dynamic Business Consultant, Mrs Masukela, captivated attendees with an insightful presentation on FDC's range of services designed to help entrepreneurs start, grow, and sustain their businesses. The event created a vibrant platform for connection and learning, with FDC actively participating in roundtable discussions and one-on-one sessions.

During these engagements, community members received hands-on guidance on business planning, funding opportunities, and compliance support — empowering them to take the next bold step in their entrepreneurial journey.

FDC remains committed to fostering local economic growth and job creation by walking alongside small businesses from vision to success.



Women Thriving with Tenacity

As Women's Month drew to a close, the Free State Development Corporation (FDC) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDFA) marked the occasion in grand style on Friday, 29 August 2025, at Kopano Nokeng in Bloemfontein.

The event celebrated the remarkable strides women continue to make in business, with FDC and SEDFA joining forces to honour women leaders who are breaking barriers, shaping industries, and driving economic sustainability across the country.



"You get in life what you have the courage to ask for."

-Oprah Winfrey



Women Thriving with Tenacity

Ms. Busi Ntsele – CEO and Founder of Ruby Red

Ms. Candy Smith – CEO of Unlimited Travel and Founder of the Free State Fashion Week

Ms. Glory Moleleki – CIDB Manager

Ms. Rethabile Matselili – Old Mutual Masisizane Representative

Ms. Mantwa Makhakhe – Founder of Epicutis

Ms. Hlalefang Zingwa – Jotlha Holdings

These phenomenal women shared their journeys, challenges, and leadership insights, inspiring attendees to embrace resilience and innovation in business. The celebration was a fitting close to Women's Month, reinforcing the importance of women's voices in shaping a thriving and inclusive economy.





FDC Lejweleputswa participates in the URCSA Women's Month Celebration

In commemoration of Women's Month, FDC Lejweleputswa was honoured to participate in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) Women's event held in Welkom. Our team had the privilege of sharing valuable business insights and information with the vibrant group of women in attendance.

The FDC believe in the pivotal role women play in driving economic growth and development. The FDC aim to empower women to become active participants in the economy and leaders in their communities. FDC Lejweleputswa remains committed to supporting women's economic empowerment





Empowering the Future: FDC Engages Youth at Career Expo held in Lejweleputswa

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) actively participated in two key youth-focused events recently held in the Lejweleputswa District — at Ferdi Meyer Hall, and the other one held Career Expo at Embonisizweni Primary School in Welkom.

Both events aimed to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to thrive in today's economy. The Industrial Summit focused on reviving and creating industrialists for economic development and job creation, while the Career Expo provided learners with practical career guidance, entrepreneurship insights, and pathways to economic participation.

Representing FDC, Mr. Delekile, Business Consultant, shared valuable advice on business development and economic growth, encouraging youth to embrace innovation and entrepreneurship as tools for success.

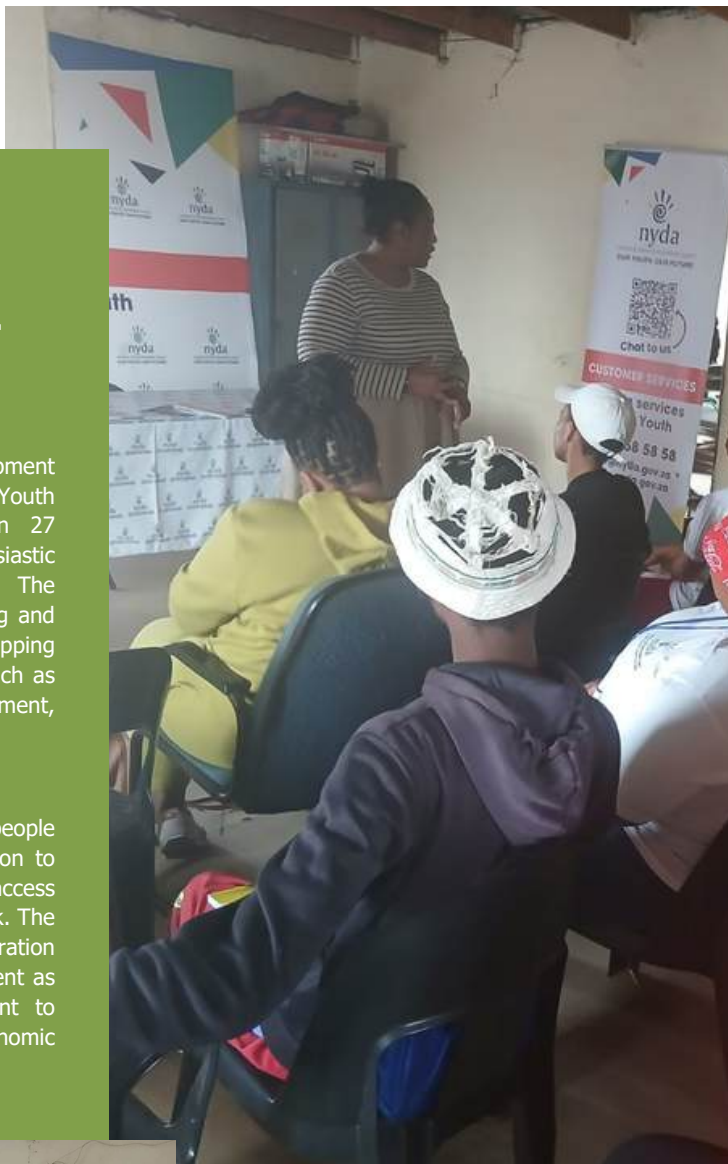
Through its participation, the FDC reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs and professionals in the Free State, ensuring they are better equipped for future opportunities.



NYDA Youth Services Day – Bothaville

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) hosted a Youth Services Day in Bothaville on 27 August 2025, drawing enthusiastic participation from local youth. The program focused on life coaching and employment preparedness, equipping attendees with essential skills such as goal setting, personal development, and job-readiness techniques.

This initiative provided young people with practical tools and inspiration to actively shape their futures and access opportunities in the world of work. The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) proudly supported this event as part of its ongoing commitment to youth empowerment and economic development.



Debt collection drive in Botshabelo, Phuthaditjhaba industrial park and Maluti-A-Phofung SEZ

The Free State Development Corporation (FDC) has recently embarked on a debt collection drive in Botshabelo, Phuthaditjhaba, and MAPSEZ. This effort aims to improve the FDC's cash flow while ensuring that essential services remain accessible to those in need.

The FDC acknowledges the pressing issue of debt spiral affecting its clients and the wider community. In response, the corporation has intensified its collection drive, focusing on large to small industrial factories, commercial properties, and FDC SMME loan clients.

The FDC recognizes the high rate of default among loan recipients, rental space occupants, and other clients. To address this challenge, the corporation is committed to engaging directly with clients in arrears. By doing so, the FDC aims to:

- Reinforce the importance of honouring financial obligations
- Ensure individual success and organizational sustainability
- Maintain the financial stability and sustainability of the corporation

Objectives of the Debt Collection Drive

The FDC's debt collection drive seeks to:

- Improve cash flow and reduce debt
- Enhance the financial sustainability of the corporation
- Ensure that essential services remain accessible to those in need
- Promote a culture of financial responsibility among clients and stakeholders



HR CORNER

FDC PAYS TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED SECURITY OFFICER

The FDC held a poignant memorial service on Thursday, August 27, 2025, at its head office in honor of Mr Mboya, a dedicated security officer who sadly passed away. Colleagues, friends, and family gathered to pay their respects and celebrate his life. Mr Mboya was laid to rest on Saturday in Theunissen, surrounded by loved ones.

The FDC staff members extends its deepest condolences to his family and friends during this difficult time. May his memory be a blessing to all who knew him



"To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die."

-Thomas Campbell



Building Resilient Economies for All

The Wellness Office hosted a landmark event at the historic Bloemfontein National Museum. The day-long program blended business expertise, health and wellness insights, and personal branding strategies to empower women holistically.

Key highlights included:

- Professional image & fashion: Mme. Sandra (Lasandyzz Studio Image) and Mme. Mphooko (Anenda Fashion/Style) explored confidence-building through style.
- Health, hygiene & wellness: Mme. Makhalenyane (FDC), Mme. Naledi (Deedee Hygiene Solutions) and Mme. Tiisetso (Tiqwe Beauty) emphasized self-care and wellbeing.
- Entrepreneurship inspiration: Mme. Monareng (Baked at Flour Paradise) shared her journey as a woman in business.
- Financial literacy: Sanlam representative equipped attendees with practical tools for building economic resilience.

Heartfelt thanks to the attendees, Sanlam, Vodacom, and Mijona International for supporting the message 'She rises. She inspires,' leaving everyone empowered to thrive.

Closing Note



this event was a fitting conclusion to Women's Month, highlighting the impact of women leaders, entrepreneurs, and changemakers in driving sustainable economic growth.

When women rise, communities flourish—and economies grow stronger.



Wellness Gallery

