



## **iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority launches its rural enterprises programme**



iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority has launched its rural enterprises programme to empower small businesses and entrepreneurs within uMkhanyakude District. The first of phase of the programme was marked by a series of information sessions where members of the communities neighbouring iSimangaliso were invited to attend presentation of this programme designed to assist new and existing businesses. The rural enterprise programme was initiated in 2008 to empower local businesses and entrepreneurs within the tourism conservation space. To date the programme has evolved and has assisted 430 enterprises with business skills development, capacity

building, and grant financing. The current management of iSimangaliso under leadership of Mr. Sibusiso Bukhosini the CEO has seen a need to expand this programme given the challenges facing communities within uMkhanyakude, namely high unemployment, poverty, joblessness, and inequality.

The aim of the programme is to support small businesses with skills and finance so that they can contribute to job creation. Skills development and entrepreneurship is key for the local communities in a post-covid19 world where revenue from tourism is at its lowest or completely dried up. Income generating activities go a long way in supporting families.

As much as iSimangaliso wishes to assist every community member with employment, or give every business an opportunity within the park, this is impossible. A programme of this nature goes a long way in capacitating businesses to grow and be enabled to seek opportunities elsewhere. This programme has no age restriction for participants. We are looking for people who have the appetite for risk taking, passionate about starting or managing a business, and they must be willing to commit themselves to training for over a period of 18 months.

The first phase of this launch included visits to all 12 Traditional Councils within iSimangaliso Wetland Park which are; Mpukonyoni, Sokhulu, Mdletsheni, Makhasa Mngobokazi, KwaJobe, KwaNgwenya, Nsinde, Mabaso, Nibela, Mbila and Tembe to issue out application forms for those who wish to apply.

Application forms for this program are available on the iSimangaliso website at [www.isimangaliso.com](http://www.isimangaliso.com) go to businesses then go to downloads and download the rural enterprise program form. You can email it to [ntsikelelo@isimangaliso.com](mailto:ntsikelelo@isimangaliso.com) or post it to The Dredger Harbour, St Lucia, 3936.

**End**

**Statement issued by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority**

**For Media enquires contact:**

Mr Bheki Manzini

Call/WhatsApp: 060 533 2082

Email: [bhekimanzini@isimangaliso.com](mailto:bhekimanzini@isimangaliso.com)