



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**04 April 2019**

### **SMALLHOLDER HORTICULTURE EMPOWERMENT AND PROMOTION APPROACH**

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has for the past few years been working on building its own capacity to drive the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) Approach in the country from a modernised and sustainable template. As part of this capacity building, the Department opened an office in Japan in 2012 and through this office, linkages to revitalise relations between the DAFF and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) office in South Africa were established.

The SHEP is a “Market-Oriented Agriculture and Promotion in Africa” project that encourages producers to move away from “growing and selling” their produce to “grow to sell.” The SHEP Approach is geared towards assisting smallholder producers to increase their income by means of capacitating them to better manage group dynamics and improving production through various techniques, such as knowing the market requirement before they start to produce. The SHEP project embodies the concepts of farming as a business which is what South African smallholder producers need.

Through engagements with the JICA office in Japan and South Africa, respectively, positive results were achieved. The JICA office agreed to reconsider South Africa through facilitating a training programme tailor-made for South African smallholder producers and Extension Practitioners as well as establishing pilot projects with relevant infrastructure.

As a result of these engagements, the survey was done by the Japanese in the Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces as part of feasibility studies. Officials from the three provinces received training on the approach in Japan and Kenya.

Since then, capacity development training in Japan and Kenya was offered to 20 officials from South Africa. Through the training, the selected officials learned the principles of SHEP on how to improve productivity of smallholder horticultural producers. The Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces have since been piloting the implementation of the SHEP Approach based on the developed action plans with support of the Japanese SHEP experts placed in different provinces.

In November 2018, two officials from the DAFF participated at the Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) of the Japan International Cooperation Agency in Japan and Malawi to fully understand the approach and its benefit and to be able to monitor implementation and provide support to provinces.

In December 2018 and February 2019, the DAFF in collaboration with JICA conducted a three-day SHEP training programme for 57 district Extension Coordinators from all the provinces in order for them to understand how smallholder producers can benefit from market-oriented agriculture and to ensure proper implementation of the programme in the country. Four officials from South Africa will attend SHEP training in Japan and Kenya in May 2019. One official is from DAFF, the other three officials are from Eastern Cape, North West and Western Cape provinces. Another group will attend the same training in November 2019.

The implementation of the SHEP Approach has seen over 743 smallholder producers benefiting from the pilot provinces. These producers now have access to the market and they are now able to find markets for themselves. Producers can now sell their products in both the formal and informal markets. Most of the producers participating in the approach are autonomous and now know that if they farm as a business, they can succeed with very limited government assistance.

Producers participating in the SHEP Approach will start to create job opportunities in their communities in order to satisfy the market. Smallholder producers will seek to produce more based on the market requirement and subsequently force them to appoint seasonal workers. This will have a direct positive impact on the rural economy. Through this intervention, producers now understand the importance of producing based on market requirements and this will result in the creation of approximately 5 000 jobs—at least one per beneficiary. Smallholder producers in the pilot provinces are now able to conduct market surveys and negotiate contracts with the formal market on their own.

All provinces will be implementing the SHEP Approach and over 5 000 smallholder producers, of which 50% are youth, will benefit during the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework. Producers will grow their produce to sell instead of growing and selling.

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