

Philippi's urban agri project gets R40m investment boost

Following Council approval, the City of Cape Town has marked the launch of the project at the Philippi Fresh Produce Market facility with the signing of the agreement with the Philippi Economic Development Initiative (PEDI), a non-profit company and local implementing partner of the City. This will see farmers in Philippi East, Cape Town benefit from a R40m of grant funding investment in the areas Philippi Agri-hub Project.



The signing of the agreement by Thomas Swana, the Chief Executive Officer of PEDI, and Osman Asmal, the Executive Director for Spatial Planning and Environment, yesterday afternoon. At the back is Alderman Grant Twigg, Alderman Marian Neuwoudt, and Alderman James Vos.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the City by Osman Asmal, the Executive Director for Spatial Planning and Environment, and Thomas Swana, the Chief Executive Officer of PEDI, yesterday afternoon.

"The purpose of the project is to revitalise small and medium-business urban farming, offer training, and increase job opportunities in Philippi. This investment comes at a time when Covid-19 is threatening the health and livelihood of local communities. Collaboration between the local government, communities, the private sector and non-governmental organisations is needed more than ever before in strengthening our resilience and overcoming challenges," said Alderman Dan Plato, the City's executive mayor.

The project is located within the Philippi Opportunity Area, and consists of three components:

- An expanded and upgraded agri-processing and packaging plant with the necessary equipment and technology to enable a variety of processes;
- An expanded waste-to-fertiliser manufacturing facility, including earthworm farming, that will assist in reducing solid waste volumes at landfills and benefit the environment; and
- A modern agri-training facility and support centre, offering a wider variety of training and skills development programmes related to small-scale organic farming methods and principles, as well as business development and support services



Workers at the Philippi Fresh Produce Market sorting seedlings.

"Philippi has significant potential for economic development given that it is close to the Cape Town International Airport, has a well-established industrial area in the east, and its proximity to the Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) that produces in excess of 100,000 tonnes of fresh produce per year. By tapping into the productive capacity of the PHA the City can begin to strengthen existing agri-value chains, while at the same time, improving local farmers' market access by using the existing infrastructure at the City's Philippi Fresh Produce Market," said Alderman Marian Nieuwoudt, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Spatial Planning and Environment.

"We also intend to expand the Philippi Fresh Produce Market to include a new market facility providing local access as an alternative for small-scale and emerging community farmers to trade at lower costs.

"Importantly, the project is also a pilot in support of establishing an 'Aerotropolis' in the Metro-south East, to leverage a possible Special Economic Zone at ACSA's 500ha Swartklip site and an industrial complex geared towards mass processing of fresh produce grown in the PHA," said Alderman James Vos, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Opportunities and Asset Management.

"It fills me with joy knowing that this initiative will stimulate growth and development among local small-scale farmers, drive economic development to the benefit of the broader Philippi community, and provide for formal and informal training and skills transfer opportunities to assist local farmers to improve farming techniques. The City believes that this project will serve as a catalyst for real economic transformation in Philippi," said Alderman Grant Twigg, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Urban Management.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>