EPWP BULLETIN

VOLUME 2. ISSUE 59 07 OCTOBER 2026



EPWP PARTICIPANTS QUALIFY AS BOILERMAKER ARTISANS

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After years of training, determination and perseverance, 11 Expanded Public Works programme (EPWP) participants from Phuthaditjhaba in the Free State have successfully completed their boilermaking apprenticeships and qualified as artisans. Their achievement marks the successful completion of a training journey that began in 2021.

The programme initially recruited 15 participants from various EPWP programmes in communities around Phuthaditjhaba. They enrolled for a three-year Boilermaking qualification, comprising 18 months of theoretical classroom training and 18 months of practical training.

Of the 15 participants, 11 successfully completed the Boilermaking qualification at NQF Level 6 and passed their Trade Test. Two participants are awaiting their final results, while two withdrew from the programme. The initiative was implemented by the EPWP in partnership with Maluti TVET College.

The training was funded by the National Skills Fund through Agriculture Sector Education and training Authority under the Artisan Development Programme. Through the programme, beneficiaries gain relevant technical skills while participating in EPWP projects, with the aim of improving their prospects of securing employment and other opportunities after exiting EPWP projects.

The training took longer than initially anticipated due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, the participants remained committed to completing their studies.

Mr Themba Tshabalala, Senior Lecturer at Maluti TVET College, highlighted the commitment demonstrated by the participants throughout the programme. “Their success reflects the value of hard work and commitment. We are proud of what they have achieved,” he said.

Ms Rose Dichakane, EPWP Training Manager at the DPWI Bloemfontein Regional Office, also commended the participants for their determination and commitment. “Their achievement is a reflection of their dedication, perseverance and willingness to learn. They remained committed even when the training became challenging and took longer than expected. Re a ba lebogisa,” she said.

Speaking on behalf of the participants, Petronella Mofokeng said the training was challenging, but the participants supported one another throughout the journey. “The training was not easy. We relied on one another for support and worked together through challenging subjects and practical components of the training,” she said.

The training has already opened new pathways for some participants, with four of the successful participants securing permanent employment as boilermakers in the private sector. The Artisan Development Programme provides technical training that combines theoretical, practical and workplace learning components in designated trades, enabling participants to achieve artisan status.

The successful completion of the programme demonstrates the programme impact in building better communities and sustainable livelihoods.



