

2014 Review and Milestones

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The Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA) looks back at 2014 as possibly one that will leave a lasting legacy for the organization. Not only did the agency mark a decade of its existence, there were numerous strategic milestones reached, but most importantly, good solid foundations to do more in the future have been set. MBDA Spokesperson, Luvuyo Bangazi reflects on the year that was.

1. EUR 5 million German Bank (KfW) funding secured for Helenvale

The KfW funded Safety and Peace through Urban Upgrading programme is as a result of an agreement between KfW and the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) with the MBDA as an Implementing Agent. The period of implementation of the SPUU Programme is 48 months and includes the following agreed upon component areas of intervention: Safer Schools programme, Public Space and Physical Infrastructure development, Youth Employment initiatives, Domestic Violence Prevention programmes, Pilot Housing Scheme initiative. Bangazi says “The Masterplan, a product of intense public participation, outlines all the individual projects and initiatives that have been prioritized for the 5 million Euro investment. The masterplan is now with the German Bank for approval and thereafter the funds will be released for implementation and in the process help to bring positive change for the people of Helenvale”.

2. Positive Economic Impact results

In May, the MBDA published its annual Economic Impact assessment results (Barometer). That study, headed by one of the leading Economic research companies in South Africa is compiled from various stakeholder interviews including ordinary citizens of Nelson Mandela Bay. The report is an economic analysis of the spend by the MBDA and the measure of its Return On Investment (ROI). Although there are quite a few challenged areas to be tackled, the study showed that the MBDA is delivering real, tangible value for the citizens of the Bay. Since establishment, the MBDA has invested and facilitated over R500 million in urban infrastructure upgrades and urban renewal initiatives in Nelson Mandela Bay. The results have been outstanding, generating R548 million in new business sales, nearly 2000 jobs created and an impressive R178 million in additional GDP created, changing the face of the Nelson Mandela Bay.

3. Baakens Valley study off the ground

The revitalization of the inner city is now being complemented by the future Baakens Valley and Marina developments led by the MBDA and Transnet respectively. The Baakens team have already presented a draft report that sketches out strategic quick wins to revitalize the Valley. A full report is to be finalized by April 2015, to coincide with the Port – Marina study. The valley is a unique opportunity for Nelson Mandela Bay's tourism real estate development. The MBDA has led this charge with the upgrade of the Tramways building into a multipurpose facility that is poised to stimulate the arts, culture and creative industry of the Bay. We envision the Valley as a meeting place, a making place and most importantly an all people place.

4. Clean Audit Report. Auditor General South Africa

Following eight consecutive unqualified audits and its first clean audit in 2012/13, the MBDA received its second clean audit report from the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) for the 2013 / 2014 financial year. This once again demonstrated the Agency's commitment to good corporate governance and sound financial controls.

5. R40m Project moves into New Brighton

In August the MBDA embarked on its biggest venture into the townships of Nelson Mandela Bay. Singaphi Street, situated in the old township of Red Location is a strategic access route to one of the City's tourism icons, the Red Location Museum. The breaking of ground was a culmination of long hours and months of consultation with various stakeholders as well as gathering local community input in order to shape the nature and form of the upgrade. "The Singaphi project is also significant to the MBDA for much more than the hard concrete works, the agency is piloting a new way of dealing the empowerment of Small Medium Micro Enterprise (SMME's) contractors. We are proud to say that we now have ten local contractors scheduled to work on the project in the first year, five are already on site and delivering good quality work" added Bangazi.

6. New 5 year Strategic Plan and focus

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the sole shareholder of the MBDA, after much deliberation and analysis decided to leverage the skills and expertise of the MBDA to benefit the rest of the Bay. Council expanded the mandate of the MBDA to become a regional economic development agency, covering the entire Metro. Together with this mandate, Council also appointed fourteen new board members in September 2014 to serve the agency for the next three years. The board has already engaged certain stakeholders for input into the agency's strategic plan, hosted a two strategic planning workshop together with the shareholder and management. It is expected that the board will approve both the strategic plan and business plan early in 2015, ready to kick into gear from July 2015.

Over and above the highlighted 2014 milestones, the MBDA received a number of accolades from a number of reputable institutions. In September, the Black Management Forum Eastern Cape awarded the MBDA board as the best performing board in the municipal environment. In October the agency was once again honored by the Kempton Park based Institute of Municipal Finance Officers in recognition of the agency's first clean audit report for 2012/13 from the Auditor General.

"We can look back at 2014 with satisfaction, knowing fully well that the year ahead is full of promise and potential to do even more. We wish all our stakeholders, citizens and partners a happy, safe festive season and a prosperous new year" concluded Bangazi.

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