

TRAILBLAZERS

Trailblazing the future

<http://www.mokwena.com>

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About Trailblazers

Trailblazers are freethinking individuals and focus groups with a shared vision of positively contributing towards advancing developmental discourse. The trailblazers' website stimulates and encourages discourse on Economic development, Political economy, knowledge economy and the green economy. The website serves as a forum for exchanging ideas, views and opinion. It attracts experts, academics, intellectuals and practitioners and anybody interested in contributing towards the debate. It is a site for generating new knowledge & cutting edge solutions for the global socio economic ills. The trailblazers seek to build social capital through the process of informal transmission of knowledge and social media. Also mentor and support practitioners in the specified field of work, through engagement, advice and referrals. The ultimate objective is to ensure professional development and support.

News of Top Stories

No escaping the Fed



London - As the Federal Reserve moves closer to scaling back its monetary stimulus, central banks in the rest of the world may get another reminder this week of just how tough it is to decouple from US interest rates. German and British bond yields tracked US yields sharply higher on Friday following solid US jobs data, a day after the European Central Bank and the Bank of England, anxious to protect their economies from rising US borrowing costs, said they would keep short-term rates firmly anchored near zero. Minutes of the Fed's June 19 policy deliberations could put further upward pressure on bond yields if they show broad support for phasing out the central bank's asset purchases, now running at \$85bn a month. Fed chairperson Ben Bernanke caught markets off-guard by announcing after that meeting that the bond buying could run its course by mid-2014, depending on job market developments. "You can imagine a story where bond yields are dragged higher. Obviously policy makers here and in Europe won't be too pleased with that," said David Owen, chief European financial economist with Jefferies in London.

<http://www.fin24.com/Economy/No-escaping-the-Fed-20130708>

Davies in bid to cut red tape for SMMEs

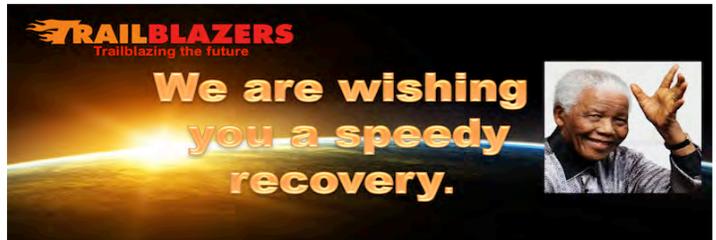


TRADE and Industry Minister Rob Davies on Wednesday launched new guidelines for municipalities to reduce red tape for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs). The latest government initiative comes after studies warned that entrepreneurship in South Africa was at its lowest level in three years, denting hopes of the sector creating thousands of new jobs. South Africa has identified SMMEs as a key jobs driver. The most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report found that less than 14% of South Africans surveyed planned to start a business within the next three years. It also found that "total entrepreneurial activity" fell to 7.3% last year, from 9.1% in 2011 and 8.9% in 2010. The gauge measures the percentage of the population of working age about to start a business or who began one within the last three-and-a-half years. South Africa's entrepreneurship activity compares unfavourably with similar countries, such as Argentina, Mexico, Malaysia, Brazil and Russia. "Small businesses are suffering from excessive red tape, bureaucracy and mind-set, so we are launching an important initiative.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/2013/07/04/davies-in-bid-to-cut-red-tape->

Quote of the week

"A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination." –Nelson Mandela



Sip 2 key to unlocking capacity along SA's freight corridors – Transnet



Government's Strategic Infrastructure Project (Sip) 2 would be key to unlocking economic development and providing much needed capacity along key freight corridors in South Africa, provided that the diverse range of public and private sector stakeholders

planned and coordinated the roll-out of infrastructure, Transnet Group strategy GM **Irwindra Naidoo** told the Transport Forum, in Durban, on Thursday. Sip 2 was aimed at strengthening the logistics and transport corridors between the major industrial hubs in the country. "We have a long-term plan and, if everybody comes together and works together, we can achieve a lot. A key challenge is to get everyone to agree on where we are going and how we are going to get there," he said. Naidoo identified the differing agendas of local and provincial authorities, as well as clashes with the private sector, as potential roadblocks. He said conflicts between the public and private sector had, in the past, prevented the realisation of the benefits of linking infrastructural projects.

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/sip-2-key-to-unlocking-capacity-along-sas-freight-corridors-transnet-2013-07-05>

Municipalities to seek restitution from bid-rigging firms



Municipal representative organisation, the South African Local Government Association (Salga), has said that, following consultations with representatives from six municipalities affected by private sector bid-rigging during past infrastructure projects, it would seek some form of restitution from those companies found guilty by the Competition Commission of collusive tendering. "We want to get the money back," Salga operations chief **Lance Joel** told a media briefing on Friday. Following the Construction Fast-Track Settlement Process, the commission last month imposed fines worth a collective R1.46-billion on 15 major construction firms found guilty of "rampant" collusive tendering related to projects concluded between 2006 and 2011. While conceding that direct settlement discussions with the companies were not off the table, Joel said the organisation would pursue some form of compensation through participation in the Competition Tribunal proceedings. Following the finalisation of the commission's findings, it had referred the settlements to the Competition Tribunal for public hearings and final approval, to be heard on July 17 and 18. However, should the outcome of the tribunal hearings not be "desirable", Salga would institute civil proceedings against the identified respondents. Salga had made an application to the tribunal to participate in these proceedings with a view to raising certain aspects and to introduce information that it believed the commission had not considered in its findings.

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/municipalities-to-seek-restitution-from-bid-rigging-firms-2013-07-05>