

**Government Technical Advisory Centre and the Economies of Regions Learning Network**  
**Conference - Economies of Regions: Economic Development at the Sub-National Level**  
**In partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand Development Studies Programme**

**Johannesburg, South Africa**

**15 to 16 October 2015**

## Call for Papers

The Government Technical Advisory Centre and the Economies of Regions Learning Network in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand's Development Studies Programme will be hosting a conference with the theme of Economic Development at the sub-national level.

Individuals wishing to contribute papers are invited to submit their title and abstracts of up to 500 words for the attention of Dr Kate Philip, at TIPS via email to: [erln@tips.org.za](mailto:erln@tips.org.za)

To be considered, abstracts should be submitted by 10 June 2015; and 15 - 20 papers will be selected for development of final papers, which will then be presented at the conference in October 2015. Authors will be notified of the final decision by 20 June 2015. Final papers are due for submission by 1 October 2015.

Abstract submissions should include full contact details of the authors.

### **1. The aim of the conference**

The conference aims to capture and bring together research on relevant South African and international experiences on approaches to sub-national economic development that will contribute to job creation and economic growth and share that knowledge and information amongst policy makers, practitioners and academics.

### **2. The context for the conference**

South Africa's legacy of underdevelopment in rural areas, small towns with limited economic potential, cities and metro's that were spatially divided by race – still persists today. This legacy, compounded with unemployment and slow economic growth, means that alternative approaches are required.

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Working at the sub-national or regional level enables the drawing together of a number of factors spatially as well as with the implementation of processes (including collaboration with business and universities), and use them as a lever to support development. An important issue for consideration in regional economic development is how to link rural to urban areas, as sources of market demand and infrastructure; as well as the role of cities as a key component of growth.

The geographic focus is thus on the sub-national arena. This is generally at a scale smaller than provincial, but larger than a single metro or municipality. It is a level of focus which becomes critical when considering major infrastructure investments (for example, the spatial SIPs), understanding value chains and clusters, and where opportunities for developing competitiveness and innovation can be coordinated. The recently promulgated Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) identifies the need for planning at this scale in certain instances.

Economic development is an ongoing priority for municipalities as part of their approach to building and growing their economy. The relationship however between how municipalities approach economic development and regional economic development is not always clear as well as the understanding of how municipalities can work together to leverage regional development potentials.

There are many South African experiences of regional economic development – good and bad – that are referred to anecdotally but that have not been rigorously documented with a view to learning cross-cutting lessons – in order to replicate what worked and avoid repeating what did not. Examples of such experience include:

- Initiatives where public sector investment stimulates private sector investment
- Initiatives that stimulate local spending, savings and investments
- Coherent economic development policies that have made a difference to local economies
- Establishment of productive networks matched to economic development funding opportunities
- Public sector driven spatial development programmes that crowd in infrastructure investment by the state and SoEs.

**3. The papers for the conference should focus on the following broad topics:**

- a. Regional innovation systems and the triple/quadruple helix
- b. Approaches to economic development from a regional perspective – Planning, Policy and Practice
- c. Regional growth through local collaboration; the role of cities in regional development; urban/rural linkages; and the cities as drivers of consumer demand

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- d. Tools and instruments for regional economic development (working with value chains and clusters for regional economic development, innovation and competitiveness)
- e. Government industrial development initiatives and links to regional economic development (for example, Special Economic Zones)
- f. The enabling environment and being investor friendly
- g. The role of infrastructure and transport systems as drivers of regional economic development
- h. Data gathering and economic information
- i. Monitoring systems for regional economic development
- j. The role of planning and approaches to planning at the sub-national level (for example, implications of SPLUMA)
- k. SMEs and effective approaches to technology transfer.

*Papers on the above topics would be a mix of policy experiences, case studies and academic research.*

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