



ERLN CONFERENCE

Economic Development at the Sub-National Level

15 & 16 October 2015 | Protea Hotel Fire & Ice Menlyn | PTA

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.

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.

CONTEXT OF 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. Working at the sub-national or regional level enables the drawing together of a number of factors spatially. Engaging at this level also enables the implementation of processes including collaboration with business and universities, and using 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.

The conference will provide a platform for academics, government officials, policy makers and civil society to explore and discuss these issues within the context of stimulating economic development.

REGISTRATION: [click here](#) or visit www.erln.org.za

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