

# Public Works programme responding to SA's challenges

By: [BuaNews, SA government news service](#)  
8th May 2013

Public Works Minister **Thulas Nxesi** says the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) remains an effective part of government's response to the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

"Our initial target in the second phase of the EPWP, for the period 2009-2014 was to create 4.5 million work opportunities," said Nxesi while presenting his Budget Vote Speech for 2013/14 in Parliament on Wednesday.

He said this target had been increased to nearly five million new work opportunities, with a special emphasis on unemployed youth and women.

Some 8 000 youth will be recruited for artisan training to be employed by the national and provincial branches of the Department of Public Works.

Nxesi said the projects carried out by the department sought to improve the quality of life of poor communities in particular.

He singled out road maintenance projects; the Working for Water projects, which also involve the removal of alien vegetation; Home Community Based Care projects; the Community Safety Programme, and a cemetery maintenance programme piloted in rural municipalities as some of the projects that made a positive impact on the lives of poor communities.

"The EPWP is making a real difference in people's lives. Earlier this week with Deputy Minister Cronin, I visited the Lentegeur Police Station in Mitchell's Plain, a state of the art project of Public Works.

"We were thronged by community members, who impressed upon us the positive impact of EPWP for individuals and the community," said Nxesi.

He said the underspending on the EPWP incentive grant – which amounted to R358 million in 2011/12 - had been eliminated in the 2012/13 financial year.

Nxesi attributed this success to the active partnership, coordination and participation of municipalities, provinces, non-profit organisations, community and faith based organisations.

"As we move into Phase III of EPWP, we have to ensure that all these stakeholders are on board, that they are supported where necessary and that, collectively, we further up-scale EPWP programmes.

"We need to investigate an expanded role for EPWP in the roll out of the Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs), and ensure that collectively as government departments and State Owned Enterprises, we all utilise EPWP and labour intensive methodology to maximise job creation," he said.

The departmental budget allocation has been reduced by 20 percent from R7.7 billion in 2012/13 to R6.2 billion in 2013/14.

The decrease is attributed to the phasing out of the devolution of the property rates grant to provinces; Cabinet approved budget reductions of R1.5 billion over the MTEF; and the shifting of R290 million to the Department of Home Affairs for border management in line with the devolution of budgets to line departments. - [SAnews.gov.za](#)

Edited by: [BuaNews, SA government news service](#)