

INSIGHTS: KZN EXPORT WEEK

Sponsored content

Event a boost for province's exporters

● *Platform to strengthen partnerships and create visibility, writes Penny Haw*

Developed by Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN) to grow export opportunities in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) by giving export-ready businesses a platform to promote their international strategies, KZN Export Week 2018 comes to an end today.

The programme comprised conferences, workshops, master classes, training, networking receptions and an exhibition and awards ceremony. It's the seventh consecutive year KZN Export Week has taken place, this year under the theme Think Global: KZN, the African Trade Hub.

This year's event was attended by more than 600 visitors, among them business people from Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Turkey, UK, the US, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Addressing a plenary session on Tuesday, TIKZN board chairperson Ina Cronjé said the event is central to the agency's commitment to assisting companies grow their brands and extend their global reach. While trade is an important engine of economic growth, many African countries have still not realised their full potential, she said, going on to encourage delegates to make the most of the opportunity to network, learn and negotiate new business at the event.

"SA's export capacity needs to be increased if we are to significantly address the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment. A 3% share of global trade is not enough. A low market diversification and export base exists in developing



L-R: Ina Cronjé, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal board chairperson; Ravi Pillay, MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works; and Neville Matjie, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal CEO.

countries. Diversifying trade has a stabilising effect on the economy. Africa trades mainly in primary commodities and low levels of intraregional trade exist. This impresses the need to work more closely with Brics countries."

Also speaking at the event, MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works Ravi Pillay said that while SA remained vulnerable to turbulences in global trade, KZN has a competitive advantage with Durban as SA's busiest container handling port and Richards Bay as SA's largest break bulk cargo port.

"Thanks to investments that come to Durban, it was named the fifth wealthiest city in Africa

two weeks ago. In its 2018 Africa Wealth Report, the AfrAsia Bank put the city's wealth at R819bn," he said. "Through Export Week, we seek to strengthen partnerships, create visibility and explore market access available to our exporters. It is an opportunity as a province to streamline our strategy and approach to export development in line with national imperatives and international best practice."

Export finance, market development and sales techniques were among the topics covered. Alexander Robertsons of Robertsons' Cargo Consultancy spoke about payment options for exports. He reiterated how important it is

for exporters to have an understanding of the currency in which they are paid, including knowledge of interest payable, factors affecting the ship-out date, delivery terms in relation to the International Commercial Terms rule and credit insurance.

Ricky Pillay of ABC Kings said understanding the language of international trade and the rules of the game are also vital.

"The product being marketed must have a message which tells people why to choose your product, be of value to the consumer and be priced right," he said. "Make your presence known online. Find international buyers by participating in exhibitions and inward/outward missions, and create conversations around your product. Selling is about relationships and appealing to people's emotions in a manner that responds to their needs or provides a solution."

Krish Maharaj of Growth Path International expanded on the subjects of sales and networking. "Taking the time to understand why some sales leads work and others don't will ensure buoyancy," he said. "Networking is core to sales and marketing. Refine your sales pitch and customise your messages to appeal to diverse groups. Become a trusted partner and learn how to handle objections during a sales pitch."

Sales and marketing manager at Dick Whittington Shoes, Tavonga Gonyora, summed up value of the KZN Export Week: "It is an excellent platform to interact with different stakeholders from all over the country ... it provides insight on what is happening beyond our borders and the export opportunities that exist."



L-R: Khanyisani Shandu, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal board member; Sihle Zikalala, MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs; and Neville Matjie, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal CEO.