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The City of Cape Town Council approved an amount of R13,78 million to upskill Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants during a Council Sitting on 28 March 2019.

The funds will be disbursed to Business Process Enabling South Africa (BPESA) Western Cape to implement two EPWP Skills Development and Job Creations Projects. Read more below:

The first project will benefit 170 participants who will receive the South African Qualifications Authority accredited training and skills development in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector.

An amount of R3,78 million has been approved for this project. The training intervention has been tailor-made for school leavers, or unemployed individuals who wish to enter the world of work. The minimum requirement is a Grade 11 or a Grade 12 certificate or the individual must have been unemployed for more than two years.

In addition, current contact centre agents who lack the competence to work in a paperless environment also stand to benefit from this intervention.

‘This training intervention is a huge opportunity for individuals to upskill themselves to enable them to tackle opportunities in the digital space.

‘It affords contact centre agents the opportunity to grow their careers and position themselves for the rapid digitisation of the contact centre industry. What stands out for me is the fact that all 170 individuals are guaranteed to be placed in a permanent call centre job at the end of the training,’ said the City’s Mayoral Committee Member for Urban Management, Alderman Grant Twigg.

Council also approved an amount of R10 million to be used specifically to address the critical technology skills shortage associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

This specific project has a two-pronged approach: firstly to focus on the skills shortage to support technology outsourcing, and secondly to focus on supporting voice-based skills development.

‘The goal of this project is to build the critical skills required by the local economy that have been outsourced, elsewhere offshore, which have resulted in an increased cost to local firms due to scarcity of the skills.

‘Our aim is also to not only develop these critical skills but to assist in closing the gap between the demand and supply of these skills. Additionally, the aim is to provide internship opportunities to candidates in the programme,’ said Alderman Twigg.

The Council further granted approval for the project to be implemented in collaboration between the City, BPeSA, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the technology skills company EOH.

This collaboration will ensure that 345 unemployed youth, between the ages of 18 and 34, will be trained during a 12-month period. A non-negotiable requirement of this project is that BPeSA Western Cape helps to enable the placement of 80% of the participants in learnerships or internships

‘The Fourth Industrial Revolution is one of the biggest disrupters of the 21st century. We are standing on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way in which we live, work, and relate to one another.

We are committed to building an inclusive city by unlocking and providing access to economic opportunities, especially for disadvantaged individuals.

‘These skills development programmes equip them with the aptitudes that can be integrated into the digital space. We need to shape a future that works for all of us by putting people first and empowering them,’ said Alderman Twigg.