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Enquiries: James de Villiers 082 766 0276

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MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER MACPHERSON SIGNS HISTORIC MOU WITH FREE STATE PROVINCE, AGRISA AND AGBIZ TO REVITALISE AGRICULTURAL ROADS IN SUPPORT OF FARMERS

- Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson officiated the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), the Free State Provincial Government, AgriSA and Agbiz to prioritise and revitalise critical agricultural road corridors in support of farmers.
- The data-driven pilot initiative will use freight flow modelling and industry-supplied logistics data to identify high-volume agricultural corridors for targeted maintenance and improvement, reducing transport costs and strengthening food security.
- The Minister said supporting farmers through improved rural road infrastructure will enhance competitiveness, sustain job creation within the agricultural value chain, and ensure limited public resources are directed to projects with the greatest economic impact.

The Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, alongside the Free State Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Public Works and Infrastructure, Kathleen Dibolelo Mance; the Head of Infrastructure South Africa, Mameetse Masemola; the CEO of the Agricultural Business Chamber, Theo Boshoff; and the CEO of Agriculture South Africa, Johann Kotzé, today officiated the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation at the Peritum Agricultural Institute in Bloemfontein, formalising a strategic partnership to improve critical agricultural road infrastructure in the Free State.

The agreement, signed by Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), the Free State Provincial Government, AgriSA and Agbiz, establishes a structured framework to identify and prioritise rural road corridors that carry high volumes of agricultural freight and have significant economic impact, and which should therefore be prioritised for maintenance and improvement.

Minister Macpherson said the initiative, which was born out of conversations he had with Mr Boshoff and Mr Kotzé at Nampo last year, will play an important role in supporting farmers in the Free State. By using data supplied by AgriSA and Agbiz to identify high-volume corridors where investment will have the greatest impact, the initiative will help drive economic growth

and sustain job creation within the agricultural sector, which holds significant potential to create thousands of new employment opportunities.

“With this initiative from Infrastructure South Africa, in partnership with AgriSA and Agbiz, we will be able to calculate the economic impact of roads that carry high volumes of agricultural output in the Free State, and demonstrate how much costs can be reduced if those roads are improved or rehabilitated. This will help all spheres of government direct infrastructure investment towards roads with the greatest potential to reduce logistics costs for farmers, which in turn will help lower costs for consumers,” Minister Macpherson said.

“As the Free State serves as the breadbasket of South Africa, the province is the ideal location to pilot this programme in support of farmers and to improve the efficiency of their operations. We thank the provincial government for its collaboration and support as we implement this programme. We know that if farmers succeed, South Africa succeeds, and we believe this pilot is a critical first step in ensuring that farmers have the infrastructure necessary to thrive.”

Minister Macpherson said that by identifying high-volume agricultural corridors and prioritising them for intervention, the partnership will ensure that the country’s limited public resources are directed where they provide the greatest benefit to farming communities. Furthermore, by working closely with AgriSA and Agbiz, Infrastructure South Africa is able to intervene more effectively in road infrastructure projects that directly support farmers’ operations.

“When rural roads fail, farmers carry the burden first. Higher transport costs reduce profitability, limit reinvestment into farms, and ultimately threaten the sustainability of agricultural businesses. Supporting farmers means fixing the infrastructure that underpins their operations so that we can meaningfully grow the economy and create much-needed jobs. It is through partnerships such as these that we are turning the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure into the economic engine of South Africa, helping us build a better country for all.”

Enquiries:

James De Villiers

Spokesperson to the Minister

082 766 0276