



UTHUKELA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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UTHUKELA ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MID - YEAR REPORT (1
JULY 2024 - 31 DECEMBER
2024)

VISION

An economically vibrant and prosperous district that remains and attracts businesses encored in unique opportunities and innovation for sustainable economic development

MISSION

Create an enabling business – friendly environment thus ensuring the retention and attraction of local and international investments and promoting new business ventures working with all social and business partners for achieving a prosperous sustainable economic development for UThukela District.

PURPOSE

The purpose is to report on activities and finances of the Agency to the Board of Directors of UThukela Economic Development Agency for the period of 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024

BACKGROUND

UThukela Economic Development Agency has embarked on a number of activities involving Tourism, Investment Promotion, Agriculture, and Finance from the period of 1 July 202 to 30 September 2024, and has expended financial resources to perform those activities

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1. CORPORATE SERVICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

1.1. COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

The compliance Checklist was amended using the previous compliance checklist. The Checklist was submitted to the board of directors for adoption. The Board in the meeting held on 8 July 2024 adopted the checklist.

1.2. PERFORMANCE REPORTS SUBMITTED TO UTDM

UThukela Economic Development Agency is required to submit its quarterly performance to the parent municipality after every quarter. The Agency's performance is measured through its SDBIP that is set in the beginning of the financial year as the work that will be done by the Agency throughout the year. The performance report comprises of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that are set to be achieved by the Agency. The Agency will submit its performance quarterly reports to uThukela District Municipality on the date to be confirmed.

1.3. QUARTERLY BOARD MEETINGS

In 1st quarter, the board of directors held their quarterly meeting on 08 July 2024 and a Special board meeting on the 22 July 2024. The following items were discussed in the meeting:

08 July 2024 Meeting

ITEMS DISCUSSED FOR NOTING:

- Quarter4 financial report
- Lease agreement
- SCM Quarter4 report
- Quarter4 report
- LGSETA Quarter4 report
- Update on disposal of the double cap
- Stakeholder analysis

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED UNDER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Portfolio Committees
- Recruitment plan for the Appointment of the CEO
- Acting Allowance for the CEO
- Approval of policies SDBIP and organogram
- Internal Auditor matters
- Compliance checklist

22 July 2024 (Special Meeting)

MATTERS FOR NOTING

- Introduction of municipal representatives

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Appointment of the CEO

SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE BOARD MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS	MEETINGS		WORKSHOP		PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES		
	08 July 2024	22 July 2024	12 September 2024	13 September 2024	Finance	LED	Corporate
DR KH Nduli	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Mrs. A Asmal	✗	✗	✗	✗	N/A	✗	N/A
Mr AM Msomi	✗	✗	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✗
Mr B Kubheka	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Ms N Zikalala	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓
Mr. M Sithole	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓

Mr. W Kunene	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓
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1.4. QUARTERLY INTERNAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

The UThukela Economic Development Agency submitted 4th Quarter report for the financial year (2023/2024) on 11 July 2024 to UTDM.

1.5. TRAINING REPORTS

1.5.1. REPORT ON WEBSITE TRAINING

Introduction

This report outlines the findings from the recent website training conducted by Mr. N. Mpungose for the IT interns at uThukela Economic Development Agency. The training aimed to equip us interns with essential skills for effectively managing and navigating the organization's website, thereby enhancing our technical proficiency and contributing to overall team productivity.

In today's digital environment, having a solid understanding of website management is crucial for IT professionals. This training covered key areas such as content management systems, website optimization techniques, and best practices for user experience.

The website training led by Mr. N. Mpungose was structured to provide interns with a comprehensive understanding of the organization's website functionalities. They learned how to navigate the CMS, upload content, and make necessary updates to ensure information is current and relevant.

The training employed a combination of instructional methods, including, Hands-on sessions allowing us to practice using the Content Management System (CMS) and apply optimization techniques in real-time. They also participated in discussions to share insights and experiences, fostering collaborative learning. Opportunities were provided for them to ask questions, ensuring clarity on complex topics. Interns appreciate the practical approach and the relevance of the content to their roles and

confidence in applying the skills learned to real-world tasks, ensuring that the training met its objectives throughout the process.

The training conducted by Mr. N. Mpungose was well-received and effective in equipping us with the necessary skills for website management, and implementing the recommendations, future training initiatives can continue to enhance the interns' professional development and contribute to the organization's digital capabilities.

1.5.2. Report on Muni E-monitoring system

Introduction

The Muni e-monitoring system training was to give guide lines on how to complete questionnaires and how important to have some officials who are responsible to track, ensure accountability on financial governance and comply with the MFMA regulations and circulars.

Background

On the 16 of September 2024, we attended a training from KZN Treasury where officials of the municipal entities to comply with the provisions of the MFMA and its regulations, to notify institutions of impending deadlines, to improve information flows for public accountability, to enhance monitoring, oversight, support measures and effective reporting by various stakeholders in municipalities, provinces and National Treasury (NT). The training was to make sure that every municipal entity has officials who are assigned to complete questionnaires quarterly under these processes:

- AFS
- SCM
- ASSETS
- INVESTMENTS
- BUDGET
- UIF and FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT

The Muni e-Monitoring system was established to evaluate the performance of an entity.

1.6. ADOPTION OF POLICIES

UThukela Economic Development Agency will be reviewing policies for the financial year 2024/2025, 5 policies in each quarter on the date to be confirmed. Organizational policies are categorised as HR and Finance policies.

The list of policies reviewed is as follows:

- Cellphone policy.
- Code of conduct.
- Fleet management.
- Fraud prevention.
- Risk management.

QUARTER 1 SCORECARD

KPI no.	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
01	Quarterly reports on adherence to the compliance checklist	1	Achieved
02	Compliance Checklist reviewed by Audit Committee and adopted by Board 30 June 2025	1	N/A
03	Performance reports submitted to UTDM by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
04	Quarterly Board meetings by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved

05	Quarterly internal Audit Committee Reports by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
06	Reviewing and adopting Strategy and policies by 30 June 2025	1	N/A
07	Conduct employee Performance Management reviews by 30 June 2025	1	N/A
08	Implementation of capacity building programs by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
09	Adoption of Policies by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved

QUARTER 2 SCORECARD

KPI no.	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
01	Quarterly reports on adherence to the compliance checklist	1	Achieved
02	Compliance Checklist reviewed by Audit Committee and adopted by Board 30 June 2025	1	N/A FOR QUARTER 2
03	Performance reports submitted to UTDM by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
04	Quarterly Board meetings by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved

05	Quarterly internal Audit Committee Reports by 30 June 2025	1	Not Achieved
06	Reviewing and adopting Strategy and policies by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
07	Conduct employee Performance Management reviews by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved
08	Implementation of capacity building programs by 30 June 2025	1	N/A FOR QUARTER 2
09	Adoption of Policies by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved

2. FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

2.1. SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The UThukela Economic Development Agency (UEDA) successfully prepared the 2023-2024 Annual Financial Statements (AFS) in July 2024. These statements were submitted to the parent municipality for internal audit in mid-August and subsequently forwarded to the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) on 30 August 2024. Despite significant challenges encountered during the preparation process, including substantial misstatements identified by AGSA, UEDA was allowed to rectify these errors. Following these corrections, UEDA achieved an **unqualified audit opinion**, reflecting improved financial management and adherence to compliance requirements.

Key Challenges:

- Limited financial capacity and human resources during the preparation process.
- The need for extensive adjustments and reconciliations to align with AGSA requirements.

2.2. MID-TERM BUDGET

In November 2024, UEDA prepared a revised draft budget to address financial realities and operational priorities. Key adjustments included:

- **Revenue Adjustments:** Exclusion of the uncommitted uMhlumayo grant.
- **Expenditure Adjustments:** Limitation of transfer expenditure to cover only the Acting CEO's salary.

These changes resulted in a reduction of the original budget allocation from **R10,615,016** to **R7,450,000**, ensuring a more sustainable financial outlook. The budget was prepared with a focus on prioritising key operational areas while minimising optional expenses.

2.3. VACANT LAND AND BUILDING DATA COLLECTION

As part of its mandate to promote investment, UEDA engaged in data collection efforts to identify and advertise available land and buildings for potential development. Activities included:

- **Engagement with Alfred Duma Municipality:** Reached out in both quarters of the reporting period. Access to the valuation roll was obtained in November 2024.
- **Field Research:** Conducted in Ladysmith, leading to the identification of strategic vacant land on Poort Road, opposite FET College.



- **Database Update:** All identified properties and valuation roll data were updated on the Agency’s website, enhancing transparency and accessibility for potential investors.

Challenges:

- Delayed access to municipal records, which slowed data verification processes.
- Limited engagement from other municipalities within the district.

2.4. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The investment opportunities identified within uThukela District, focusing on Ladysmith (Alfred Duma Municipality) and Estcourt (Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality). Highlights include:

- Restaurant Centre in Ladysmith: Potential for leasing spaces, promoting local crafts, and boosting tourism-related services.
- Developments in Estcourt: Opportunities from a new hospital, shopping center, and the renovation of the former Masonites property into the Estcourt Intermodal Terminal Logistics, which will facilitate trade and export activities.
- Logistics and Trade: Investment in warehouses, transport services, and trade hubs, supported by the Ladysmith-Newcastle corridor expansion.



N11 ROAD CONSTRUCTION

These projects present opportunities to enhance economic growth, create jobs, and support sustainable development in the district.

2.5. VACANT LAND AND BUILDING DATA COLLECTION

As part of its mandate to promote investment, UEDA engaged in data collection efforts to identify and advertise available land and buildings for potential development. Activities included:

- **Engagement with Alfred Duma Municipality:** Reached out in both quarters of the reporting period. Access to the valuation roll was obtained in November 2024.
- **Field Research:** Conducted in Ladysmith, leading to the identification of strategic vacant land on Poort Road, opposite FET College.
- **Database Update:** All identified properties and valuation roll data were updated on the Agency's website, enhancing transparency and accessibility for potential investors.



Challenges:

- Delayed access to municipal records, which slowed data verification processes.
- Limited engagement from other municipalities within the district.

2.6. SMME TRAINING SESSIONS

UEDA conducted two training sessions tailored to empower SMMEs with critical knowledge on regulatory compliance and business operations:

- **Dates:** 25 November 2024 and 9 December 2024.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Services provided by the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), including company registration, intellectual property protection, and compliance.
 - Essential SARS services, including tax registration, VAT compliance, PAYE, and income tax filing.

While turnout was below expectations, participants expressed positive feedback on the relevance and practicality of the training content. Plans are underway to increase awareness and attendance for future sessions through targeted outreach and partnerships with local stakeholders.



2.7. SMME SUPPORT SERVICES

UEDA provided direct support to five (5) SMMEs, addressing critical business needs and fostering entrepreneurship:

- **Business Registration:** Assisted two (2) businesses in registering with CIPC:
 - MZAYI ENTERPRISE PTY (LTD)
 - WONDERBOY INTERNET CAFÉ PTY (LTD)
- **Beneficial Ownership Guidance:** Ensured compliance with new regulatory requirements.
- **Business Plan Development:** Supported three (3) SMMEs in creating comprehensive business plans:
 - MVIKELWA AND BROTHERS PTY (LTD)
 - MTHANDI PTY (LTD)
 - Thengothandayo Primary Cooperative Limited.

2.8. TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



In support of agricultural SMMEs, UEDA facilitated cost-effective transportation of produce to market:

- **July – August 2024:** Transported 2,052 cabbages at a rate of **R6.50** per unit, totaling **R3,857.55**.
- **November 2024:** Transported 300 cabbages, generating a revenue of **R318.00**.

This initiative addressed logistical challenges for small-scale farmers and contributed to market access and revenue generation.

2.9. ADVERTISING AND LIAISING WITH LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES ABOUT UEDA'S SERVICES

To enhance awareness of its services, UEDA launched targeted advertising campaigns and community engagement initiatives:

- **Local Newspaper Advertising:** Raised awareness of SMME support services, resulting in an expanded database of beneficiaries.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Collaborated with local municipalities, councillors, and schools to identify business owners living with disabilities.

- Participated in events such as the **Inkanyezi Special School Graduation** on 28 November 2024 and **Disability Day at Roosboom** on 12 December 2024. In which we were given a platform to share the services and work that is done by the Agency to assist people with disabilities, with operating and non-registered business.



2.10. SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES OWNED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Successfully partnered with municipalities to identify and engage targeted individuals and businesses. This initiative aligns with UEDA's commitment to fostering inclusive economic development and supporting enterprises from historically disadvantaged communities through its programs. UEDA identified and supported five (5) businesses owned by persons with disabilities, primarily within the sewing industry. Key initiatives included:

- **Provision of Materials and Tools:** Supplied essential resources to enhance productivity and operational efficiency.
- **Geographical Reach:**
 - Four (4) businesses located in Alfred Duma Municipality.
 - One (1) business situated in Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality.

- **Promotion Efforts:** Showcased their products on the Agency's Facebook page and website, boosting visibility and market reach.

**EMPOWERING TALENT FROM EVERY CORNER
IN OUR DISTRICT**



MR M Shabalala is a skilled seamstress who creates beautiful, handmade dresses, shirts and many more from his home, providing that no disability can limit his talent.



MRS Kubheka is a beadwork artisan creating stunning creations with a keen eye for detail, showcasing the rich tradition for her craft.

**For more info contact Ms M Mthembu
on 0829289404**



MR Makhunga is a skilled welder specializing in fabrication work, including assembling and welding metal structures such as gates, fences, and railings. For high-quality craftsmanship and reliable service.



Kids from KwaZamokuhle school are young creators who makes stylish pillowcases and crafting beautiful beadwork, turning their creativity into a source of pride.

2.11. FUNDING APPLICATION ASSISTANCE



UEDA identified funding opportunities for SMMEs and actively assisted them in applying for various programs:

Key Funding Sources:

- KZN Youth Fund (closed 1 November 2024).
- Agro-processing Support Scheme.
- ADA Application Form.
- National Empowerment Fund.
- Agriculture and Rural Development Funding.

This proactive approach facilitated access to essential resources and financial support for eligible SMMEs.

2.12. BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BRE)

As part of its BRE strategy, UEDA engaged with prominent stakeholders to strengthen economic activity within the district:

- **Maersk:** Held an engagement on 23 July 2024 to explore logistics and supply chain opportunities. Maersk has taken over management of the warehouse previously operated by Bakers. Key challenges highlighted included road flooding, potholes, and insufficient lighting on the road from the warehouse to Helpmekaar. Proposals to address these issues will be submitted to the Alfred Duma Municipality and the Department of Transport.
- **Defy:** Met on 14 November 2024 to discuss topics such as potential relocation, community protests, and other concerns. Defy also pointed out challenges with the availability of skilled labor. During the Durban ICC Investment Conference held on 11–12 November, Defy announced an additional R500 million investment commitment, primarily aimed at sustaining operations and retaining existing jobs.

These engagements laid the groundwork for long-term partnerships and enhanced investment prospects in the region.

QUARTER 1 SCORECARD

KPI NO.	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
10	Submission of credible annual financial statements and performance report to the Auditor-General by 31 August 2024	1	Achieved
12	Three (3) monthly financial reports by 30 September 2024	3	Achieved
14	One (1) report on collecting vacant land and building data from municipalities and the private sector and advertise available land or buildings by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
15	One (1) report on the Identification of investment opportunities within the uThukela District by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved

16	Three (3) Monthly reports on OSS expenditure 30 September 2024	3	Not achieved
17	One (1) report on the adoption of manuals by MANCO by 30 September 2024	1	Not Achieved
18	One (1) report on services rendered by 30 September 2024	1	Not Achieved
19	One (1) report on transportation services by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
20	Advertise for SMMEs to be enlisted on the Agency's database by 30 September 2024	1	Not achieved
21	Advertise and liaise with the LMs for targeted individuals and businesses to be enlisted on the Agency's database by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
24	Two (2) SMME funding applications by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
25	Compilation of quarterly statistics on the services rendered in terms of OSS One (1) report by 30 September 2024	1	Not achieved
26	One (1) engagement with Major Industry by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved

QUARTER 2 SCORECARD

KPI NO.	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
11	One (1) draft mid-term budget by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
12	Three (3) monthly financial reports by 31 December 2024	3	Achieved

14	One (1) report on collecting vacant land and building data from municipalities and the private sector and advertise available land or buildings by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
15	One (1) report on the Identification of investment opportunities within the uThukela District by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
16	Three (3) Monthly reports on OSS expenditure 31 December 2024	3	Not achieved
17	Report on two (2) training undertaken by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
18	One (1) report on services rendered by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
19	One (1) report on transportation services by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
21	Advertise and liaise with the LMs for targeted individuals and businesses to be enlisted on the Agency's database by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
23	One (1) report by 31 December 2024 - Marketing of products and services of businesses operated by disabled and secluded individuals	1	Achieved
24	Two (2) SMME funding applications by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
25	Compilation of quarterly statistics on the services rendered in terms of OSS One (1) report by 31 December 2024	1	Not achieved
26	One (1) engagement with Major Industry by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved

CHALLENGES

- The Finance and Investment section has a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for a One-Stop Shop that relies on external stakeholders, specifically TIKZN. The One-Stop Shop may be launched before the end of March 2025.
- Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) are often unresponsive to some of the services offered by the Agency, such as training programs.
- Many disabled SMMEs do not have registered businesses and require financial assistance from the Agency to register their businesses.

2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES	REMEDY	PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION
Budget Constraints Due to Early Allocation	Enhanced budget planning and allocation to avoid over-committing resources early in the year.	The 2024/2025 budget is aligned with all key performance indicators (KPIs) that are impacted by the budget.
	Balanced and phased budget distribution to ensure funds are available throughout the year.	
Impact of Management Change	Implement a structured handover process to ensure continuity during leadership transitions.	A transition plan has been successfully implemented, ensuring continuity and stability in operations.
	Establish clear documentation and communication for ongoing projects.	All projects are thoroughly documented, and a proper filing system has been established.
	Appoint temporary leadership or transitional teams if needed.	Although there are still vacant managerial positions, officers are currently leading the sections.
Limited Financial Resources	Diversify funding sources by exploring external grants, partnerships, and sponsorships.	UEDA has submitted two funding applications for the 2024/2025 financial year.
	Seek additional financial support to reduce	UEDA Offers services to generate revenue

	dependency on internal resources.	
Inability to Meet Targets Due to Project Delays	Develop a prioritisation system to focus on high-impact projects aligned with strategic goals.	Regular follow-up on projects in place to identify problems earlier
Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation	Establish regular monitoring and evaluation of both budgets and projects.	The procurement plan is monitored to keep track of spending.
	Perform frequent reviews to identify issues early and make necessary adjustments.	

3. LED PROGRAMMES – MID-YEAR REPORT (30 DECEMBER 2024)

3.1. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS



The section successfully conducted two key stakeholder engagement sessions aimed at enhancing tourism marketing and development in the uThukela District.

The first engagement, held on the 7th of August 2024, focused on the Beyeng Production initiative, bringing together representatives from the trade sector, local tourism operators, and trade associations. This session facilitated valuable discussions on the development and promotion of local

tourism products, particularly focusing on fostering collaboration for tourism route development and exploring market opportunities for local artisans. The engagement was successful and met the targeted milestone for the quarter.

The second engagement took place on the 15th of November 2024, at the Winterton Tourism Offices, with the Cathkin Manager. This session concentrated on strategies to market uThukela District as a premier tourist destination. The meeting proved to be highly productive, enhancing mutual understanding and collaboration among the stakeholders. Further engagements will follow as part of the ongoing efforts to finalize the district's tourism marketing strategy.

3.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

The section has made significant steps in stakeholder engagement and the tourism



route development across the uThukela District. In the first quarter, a key engagement session was held with stakeholders from the private sector, local tourism operators, and trade associations. The focus was on promoting local tourism products, developing cohesive tourism routes, and identifying opportunities for local artisans. This engagement was instrumental in enhancing collaboration for tourism route

development.

In the second quarter, the section continued its efforts with three additional engagements centered on strengthening the tourism routes across uThukela. These engagements involved local businesses, traditional authorities, and local municipality, and they contributed to the creation of structured tourism routes designed to highlight the district's key attractions. The focus was placed on enhancing rural and township tourism routes, with particular attention to underrepresented areas, such as historical and cultural sites.

The ongoing engagements have had a direct impact on advancing tourism routes in the district. In Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality (ILM), stakeholders emphasised the need for improvements in local tourism infrastructure and the promotion of cultural heritage. Specialised training for local businesses, especially tour guides, was identified as essential to ensure high-quality tourism services and support long-term sustainability in the local tourism sector.

In Okhahlamba Local Municipality (OLM), the Thandanani area emerged as a promising new tourism hub, offering substantial potential for emerging tourism businesses. Efforts to foster partnerships with local businesses and coordinate capacity-building programs were central to the discussions, ensuring that tourism development remains sustainable and inclusive in this municipality.

In Alfred Duma Local Municipality (ADLM), discussions focused on a new tourism route linking the Nambiti Game Reserve with the Battlefields routes. This new route is expected to boost tourism flow and connect two of the district's key tourism destinations. Additionally, a proposal for a cultural village to serve both as a visitor attraction and a platform for local cultural activities was well received. This initiative aims to support local crafters and enrich the tourism experience in ADLM.

Overall, these engagements have laid a strong foundation for the continued growth of tourism in uThukela. The focus on strengthening local capacity, fostering partnerships, and enhancing tourism offerings ensures that the district is well-positioned for sustainable tourism development.

3.3. RURAL AND TOWNSHIP TOURISM



The LED Programmes Section has made significant strides in promoting rural and township tourism, achieving key goals and addressing challenges that arose during the review period.

The first phase of the initiative involved the successful completion of three rural and township tourism awareness campaigns held in Okhahlamba, Inkosi Langalibalele, and Alfred Duma Local Municipalities. These campaigns aimed to educate local communities about the potential benefits of tourism and to highlight township tourism as a viable economic opportunity. With robust participation from community members, local businesses, and traditional authorities, these events facilitated a better understanding of how to treat tourists and emphasized tourism's role in community upliftment and economic development.

Building on the success of the awareness campaigns, the UThukela Economic Development Agency (UEDA) continued its efforts to address rural and township tourism challenges through the Rural and Township Tourism Functionality initiative.

This initiative included engagements in Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele, and Okhahlamba Municipalities in November 2024.

Key findings from these engagements revealed several challenges. In Inkosi Langalibalele, three active businesses in Ntabamhlophe, including Zamokuhle Lodge and traditional food kitchens, focused on cultural tourism, with the key challenge being the lack of accredited tour guides. In Alfred Duma, three traditional food kitchens and two artisans were seeking to integrate their businesses into tourism, with the main challenge being market access. In Okhahlamba, businesses involved in accommodation and traditional food, along with the resumption of Cannibals Lodge, faced challenges with market access and the underutilization of cultural resources.

Overall, a total of eight businesses in uThukela District were operational during the review period. The findings highlight the ongoing need for addressing challenges such as market access and capacity building in the tourism sector. These areas will continue to be a primary focus for the LED Programmes Section as it works to strengthen and grow rural and township tourism in the district.

3.4. MARKET FOR SOUVENIRS

The section successfully compiled a comprehensive database of souvenir crafters within the uThukela District. This database includes detailed profiles of local artisans, their product offerings, and contact information, which will facilitate better market access and exposure for these small businesses. This initiative aligns with the agency's commitment to supporting local craftsmanship and integrating souvenir production into the broader tourism value chain.



On December 5, 2024, a souvenir market was held at the Energy Garage in Winterton, strategically located to attract both international and local tourists during the peak season. Nine local crafters from the uThukela District participated in the event, showcasing their handmade products. The market

experienced significant foot traffic, resulting in four immediate sales and 12 custom orders, reflecting strong interest in personalized purchases.

The event proved beneficial by fostering interaction between crafters and tourists, enhancing brand visibility for the participating artisans. To improve future market outcomes, adjustments to marketing strategies are recommended, such as extending event hours during weekends and evenings to maximize engagement and sales opportunities.

3.5. TOURISM ACTIVATION



Two successful tourism activation events were held in uThukela during the year, designed to promote the district as a prime tourism destination and enhance engagement with local and international tourists.

The first event took place at Astron Energy on September 6, 2024. This activation focused on increasing awareness of uThukela's tourism products and attracting visitors to explore the region's diverse offerings. The event saw strong attendance, with brochures detailing key tourism attractions distributed to generate interest in the district.

The second event was held at Engen Garage in Winterton on December 6, 2024. Similar to the first event, it highlighted the variety of tourism options in uThukela. A total of 600 brochures were distributed at both events, showcasing the district's key attractions, activities, and destinations. The distribution of these materials helped raise awareness and fostered greater engagement with potential visitors.

These activations have significantly contributed to promoting uThukela's tourism sector, strengthening the local tourism industry, and encouraging tourists to explore the district's diverse offerings. The continued success of these events aligns with uThukela's ongoing efforts to position the district as a premier tourism destination.

3.6. FOLLOW-UP ON ACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS

The section has diligently followed up on the accreditation application process, ensuring that all necessary documents were uploaded and communication with the relevant institutions was maintained. Initially, UEDA submitted the required documents to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), which included the Occupational Health and Safety Audit Report, Proof of Ownership or Lease Agreement, and other essential documents. These actions were completed within the expected timeframe.

Despite multiple attempts to confirm receipt of the application, no response was initially received from QCTO. However, on November 19, 2024, QCTO acknowledged the submission and requested the learner Metrix as part of the application process. UEDA is now in the process of finalising these Metrix and will submit them promptly to QCTO. The agency continues to monitor communications to ensure that the accreditation application progresses smoothly and within the expected timeline.

3.7. LIVESTOCK AUCTION AND FEEDING

In October 2024, the uThukela Economic Development Agency (UEDA), in collaboration with the Ncunjane Livestock Association and Mdukatshani NGO (specialists in animal health), undertook a significant initiative to support local goat farmers. The program involved the vaccination and tagging of goats, culminating in a successful auction held in Ncunjane on October 29, 2024.

Preparatory Efforts



NCUNJANE GOAT AUCTION

To ensure the success of the auction, UEDA and Mdukatshani NGO conducted home visits on October 21 and 22, 2024. During these visits, a total of 109 goats were vaccinated and tagged. This effort ensured the animals were in good health and met traceability and health standards.

Essential equipment and supplies were procured to facilitate the auction, including:

- 5 units of 500ml supplements
- 5 units of 2L liquid drench
- 1 goat tattoo kit
- 100 goat ear tags
- 4 goat bales

The total cost of these supplies amounted to R16,745.30. These measures not only improved goat health management but also prepared the livestock for the market, ensuring farmers had a competitive edge.

Feeding of Goats

During the auction, UEDA provided on-site feeding for the goats to maintain their health and energy. Proper feeding enhanced the animals' presentation and overall condition, fostering buyer confidence and ensuring a successful sale.

Auction Highlights

All goats presented at the auction had been vaccinated and tagged, ensuring buyers of their quality and health. This preparation fostered trust among participants, leading to active bidding and competitive pricing for the livestock.

Participation and Livestock Details

Category	Total Number Offered	Total Number Sold
Farmers Participated	31	
Goats	109	109
Sheep	5	4

Financial Summary

Description	Amount (R)
Gross Earnings from Goat Sales	216,100.00
Commission Earned	3,940.00
Average Goat Price	1,912.00
Total Earnings	220 040.00

The initiative provided farmers with an opportunity to generate income and expand their market reach. Farmers expressed gratitude for the assistance, acknowledging its role in making their livestock market-ready.

This initiative demonstrated UEDA's commitment to supporting local farmers by addressing health management, facilitating market access, and ensuring comprehensive support from preparation to sale.

3.8. CHICKEN ABATTOIR ESTABLISHMENT

The section completed its research on the construction, registration, and operation of a chicken abattoir in uThukela District. This research covered key areas such as regulatory compliance, site selection, and operational guidelines, all specifically tailored to the district's needs. The findings will serve as a foundation for establishing abattoirs in the region, supporting local poultry production, and creating economic opportunities for the community.

UEDA conducted a series of engagements to present the concept document for the chicken abattoir in uThukela. On November 22, 2024, the first presentation was made to Alfred Duma Local Municipality (ADLM) officials, including the LED Manager and Agriculture officers. A second presentation was held on November 25, 2024, for Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality (ILM), with the LED Officer in attendance. Both municipalities expressed strong support for the initiative, recognizing its potential to boost the district's economy and provide vital market opportunities for local poultry farmers.

Following these municipal engagements, UEDA organized sessions with farmers on November 26 and 27, 2024, involving ten poultry businesses. The farmers expressed great enthusiasm for the project, highlighting its potential to address market access issues and reduce exploitation within the poultry sector. The discussions emphasised a shared commitment to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and driving economic growth in uThukela.

3.9. AGRICULTURAL MARKET ESTABLISHMENT

The research on the registration and operation of agricultural markets in uThukela was successfully completed within the target timeline. The study provides a comprehensive guide for establishing an agricultural market, including regulatory requirements, operation strategies, and potential locations. This research will serve as a valuable resource for local farmers and cooperatives seeking formal market access for their produce.

Following the completion of the research, UEDA conducted a series of meetings in November 2024 to discuss the establishment of an agricultural market in the uThukela District. On November 22, a concept document detailing the proposed market was presented to Alfred Duma Local Municipality, with participation from the LED Manager and Agriculture Officers. On November 25, a similar presentation was made to Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality, where the LED Officer was also involved. Both municipalities expressed strong support for the concept, recognising its potential to boost the local economy and provide significant assistance to farmers.

Subsequent to these engagements, UEDA held discussions with local farmers on November 26 and 27, engaging a total of 32 participants. These conversations focused on addressing challenges related to market accessibility and exploitation, with farmers expressing enthusiasm for the initiative. They also indicated their willingness to collaborate with UEDA, demonstrating a shared commitment to ensuring the success of the agricultural market and fostering sustainable agricultural development in the district.

3.10. SUGAR BEANS

UEDA made significant steps in supporting bean farmers within the district. The creation of a comprehensive database for bean farmers was successfully completed. This database is a vital resource, enabling better communication and collaboration between UEDA and various agricultural stakeholders. The database will play a key role in providing ongoing support to bean farmers in the district.

In addition, UEDA procured 150 x 25 kg bags of sugar bean seeds, further demonstrating its commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity in the region. These seeds are essential for farmers to continue cultivating and improving their bean production, contributing to local food security and economic growth.

As part of its support efforts, UEDA conducted a series of site visits to assess the eligibility of farms for participation in its agricultural project. A total of 14 sites across three local municipalities Okhahlamba Local Municipality (OLM), Alfred Duma Local Municipality (ADLM), and Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality (ILM) were visited. The site visits were aimed at ensuring that the selected farms met the necessary criteria to participate in the UEDA project.

During these visits, all 14 farms were found to meet the eligibility requirements, which included land ownership or permission to use the land, a history of sugar bean cultivation, and secure fencing. Each farm demonstrated the necessary infrastructure and experience to participate in the project, making them suitable candidates for UEDA's agricultural support programs.

These efforts are expected to have a lasting impact on the local agricultural sector, as UEDA continues to enhance the capacity of bean farmers and strengthen the

agricultural value chain in UThukela District. The successful identification of eligible farms ensures that the project will proceed smoothly, contributing to sustainable agricultural growth in the area.

3.11. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UBUMBANO CHICORY PROJECT

The section has made significant progress in engaging stakeholders for the re-establishment of the Ubumbano Chicory Reproduction Project. Key consultations were held with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) to develop a comprehensive business plan aimed at revitalising the project. These engagements are crucial for ensuring the success of the chicory project, which holds the potential to create jobs and contribute to the agricultural economy in the uThukela District.

In addition to these engagements, UEDA successfully developed an in-house business plan for the Ubumbano Co-operative. This plan is designed to secure funding and facilitate the revival of chicory production in the district. The business plan focuses on empowering local farmers, particularly small-scale producers, by providing necessary resources, training, and market access. It also emphasises aligning the cooperative's operations with industry standards to ensure sustainability and competitiveness. This initiative is expected to rejuvenate the district's agricultural sector, create employment opportunities, and position chicory farming as a viable contributor to the local economy.

QUARTER 1 SCORECARD

KPI	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
27	Number of stakeholder participation in the district LED Tourism Forum engagements held by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved

28	Identification and packaging of new tourism routes by 30 September 2024	3	Achieved
29	Rural and township destination marketing by 30 September 2024	3	Achieved
30	Market for souvenirs by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
31	Number of tourism activation programs conducted by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
32	Coordinate accreditation of UEDA with the QCTO by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
33	Livestock auctions and agricultural show by 30 September 2024	1	Not Achieved
34	Lobbying for a chicken abattoir by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
35	Lobbying for an agricultural market by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
36	Reports submitted on sugar bean seeds procurement and distribution (1), Monitoring (1), Harvesting, and Evaluation (1) by 30 September 2024	1	Achieved
37	Number of stakeholder meetings (4), Site assessment report completed (3), renovations, Business plan developed, Funding application submitted (2) by 30 June 2025	1	Achieved

QUARTER 2 SCORECARD

KPI	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	RESULTS
27	Number of stakeholder participation in the district LED Tourism Forum engagements held by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
28	Identification and packaging of new tourism routes, Three Meetings and engagements held by 31 December 2024	6	Achieved
29	Rural and township destination marketing by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
30	Market for souvenirs by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
31	Number of tourism activation programs conducted by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
32	Coordinate accreditation of UEDA with the QCTO by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
33	Livestock auctions and agricultural show by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
34	Lobbying for a chicken abattoir by 31 December 2024	2	Achieved
35	Lobbying for an agricultural market by 31 December 2024	2	Achieved
36	Reports submitted on sugar bean seeds procurement and distribution (1), Monitoring (1), Harvesting, and Evaluation (1) by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved

37	Development of a business plan developed by 31 December 2024	1	Achieved
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2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE	REMEDY	PROGRESS
CIPC Document Delay in Accreditation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular follow-ups with CIPC to resolve pending status of company registration document. - Maintaining open communication with QCTO to explain delays and provide necessary updates. - Expediting the resolution of the document issue with CIPC to meet QCTO's requirements. 	<p>UEDA successfully resolved the CIPC document issue in the first quarter of 2024/2025 and is proceeding with the accreditation process.</p>
Marketing and Visibility Limitations for Smaller Tourism Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations to smaller businesses for improving their marketing strategies, such as creating promotional materials and investing in digital marketing. - Collaboration with local municipalities to enhance marketing support for small businesses. - Provide guidance and support on digital platforms and social media marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zithei Lodge and other small businesses have started receiving marketing recommendations. - Efforts are underway to increase visibility through collaborative marketing strategies. - UEDA created brochures in the second quarter and will print and distribute

4. FINANCIAL VIABILITY

December Monthly report