

Employment and Labour readies to implement new Employment Equity Act

The Department of Employment and Labour is gearing for the implementation and enforcement of the new Employment Equity (EE) Act, once Parliamentary processes are finalised by March 2022.



Source: Edhar Yuralaits – 123RF.com

In a statement on Thursday, the department's Director for Employment Equity, Ntsoaki Mamashela, said now that Parliament has resumed from recess, hopes were high that the processing of the EE bill would be expedited.

The bill is expected to go to the National Council of Provinces for consideration soon.

Reduce regulatory burden

The Amendment of the EE Act of 1998 is intended to, among other things, reduce the regulatory burden on small business; empower the Employment and Labour Minister to regulate sector specific EE numerical; and promulgate section 53 of the Employment Equity Act for the issuing of the EE Compliance Certificate.

Mamashela made the remarks at the start of the department's series of EE national workshops to update on the EE amendments and EE sector targets. The initial workshop was targeting stakeholders in Limpopo province.

"The expected introduction of five-year sector targets will mark the beginning of a clean slate. All current EE plans will fall away on 22 September 2022 and the new plans will have to be aligned with five-year targets. Self-regulation has not worked," she said.

Mamashela said further sector engagements, which started in 2019, on sector targets will continue.

"These have already been held with sectors such as mining, financial & business services, wholesale & retail, and construction. By June 30, 2021, the department had engaged with all 18 economic sectors and concluded an agreement with the financial and business services sector."

The department is currently analysing written submissions in response to the proposed sector EE targets from the remaining 17 sectors with the view of conducting follow-up engagements in an attempt to reach consensus.

"It is envisaged that the sector engagements will be concluded by February 2022 with proposed targets," she said.

Virtual workshops

The department's annual employment equity workshops are being held through virtual Microsoft Teams in each of the nine provinces under the theme: "Real transformation makes business sense".

The workshops, which will run until 28 September, will focus on respective provincial EE status; update on EE Amendments and EE Sector targets; how to access copies of the EEA2 online by completing the EEA11 form, including 2021 EE reporting; and EE inspections and enforcement in the labour market.

The workshops are targeted at employers and their employers' organisations; human resources executives and practitioners; EE Forum members; assigned senior managers/transformation managers, academics; employees and trade unions; labour relations practitioners; and civil society organisations, among others.

The schedule for the remaining planned virtual workshops is as follows:

- Free State – Thursday, 02 September 2021
- KwaZulu-Natal – Tuesday, 07 September
- Eastern Cape – Wednesday, 08 September
- Western Cape – Tuesday, 14 September
- Gauteng – Wednesday, 16 September
- Northern Cape – Tuesday, 21 September
- North West – Wednesday, 22 September
- Mpumalanga – Tuesday, 28 September