

Skills vital to success of National Development Plan

By [Nick Hedley](#)

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The metals and engineering industries will play an important role in government's National Development Plan (NDP) and infrastructure programme, says newly appointed executive director of the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of SA (Seifsa), Kaizer Nyatumba.



SA may have to import skills unless it starts major training programmes. Image: Wiki Images

However, Nyatumba said achieving the skills required for the NDP and infrastructure programme would be "critical" for the industries, which suffered from a shortage of artisans in particular. Construction sector analysts have said a lack of skills in the industry is one of the sector's major challenges.

Seifsa represents 28 independent employer bodies in the metal and engineering industries, with a combined membership of 2,224 companies which employ 174,257 people.

Nyatumba said economic development in any country hinged on a robust metals and engineering industry". He said the NDP is very important for South Africa's continued growth and development, and the metals and engineering sector will play a critical role in that regard.

Skills need to implement NDP

Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan said in October the NDP would provide a strong platform for collaborative partnerships across society as well as for the transition to a faster-growing and more inclusive economy. Nyatumba said business needed to thrive in SA in order to drive growth, and added that generally, business wants a situation where there can have a meaningful partnership with government and labour.

"SA needs a high level of stability and economic policy certainty so that everybody knows what the rules of the game are and everybody works in a manner that indicates that they are partners interested in seeing the country growing economically," Nyatumba said.

He said while the government's infrastructure plan was expected to boost the metal and engineering industries, a lack of skills could be a handicap to the infrastructure roll out. "In partnership with government and labour, we need to make sure that we train more artisans," he said.

Last week, Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba attended the official intake of 1,000 additional artisan learners to be trained at six Transnet Engineering facilities across the country.

During his 2013 budget vote speech, Gigaba said state-owned companies would take in young people from across the country for training in several scarce and critical skills such as artisans and technicians.

Beyond South Africa, Nyatumba said the rest of Africa was becoming increasingly important for Seifsa's members, who were looking to expand into Africa.



A trainee artisan at work. Image: Fedusa

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