

Nissan to create jobs in the automotive sector

Nissan will boost employment in South Africa with the local production of the next generation Navara poised to create an estimated 1,200-plus new jobs in the automotive sector.



Premier David Makhura and President Cyril Ramaphosa with Nissan plant employees

Speaking at the recent announcement of Nissan's decision to manufacture - for the first time in history - the full model line-up of the Navara on home soil, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, commented that the automotive sector is an essential part of the industrialisation of our economy,

"The sector is a reliable partner but it is also a dependable ally, as it has demonstrated by this investment, on our path to position manufacturing as a catalyst to development and inclusive growth," the President said.

Manufacturing of the new Navara at Nissan's Rosslyn facility, in Pretoria, is expected to begin in 2020 and to see the plant's current production output grow by more than 50%.

Increasing capacity

In order to increase capacity to this level, a two-shift operation will be required and this alone will result in the immediate creation of an additional 400 jobs. Hundreds more vacancies will be created, though, at Nissan as well as within the broader industry and, specifically, the local component supplier industry.

"Nissan has a deep understanding of the need to invest in skills development in a meaningful way. Not just for our benefit, in terms of having a skilled workforce at our technologically advanced vehicle manufacturing plant in Rosslyn; but for the benefit of all the eager, young minds in this country, who are simply seeking opportunities to improve themselves," says managing director for the Nissan Group of Africa, Mike Whitfield.

AIDC partnership

To this end, Nissan has - in partnership with the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC) - built an incubation and training centre at the Rosslyn manufacturing plant, through which a five-year training and mentorship programme is offered. This programme serves to equip entrepreneurs with the skills they need to run their companies - with the AIDC's

focus on providing them with the business skills they need and Nissan's, on giving them the necessary technical know-how.

"Programme hopefuls subject themselves to a rigorous selection process which includes multiple rounds of interviews as well as a two-day assessment incorporating psychometrics, role play and a case study," explains the AIDC's Dineshan Moodley, "Successful candidates are enrolled in the programme and taught about assembly line layout, process optimization, efficiency improvement, housekeeping, finance management, human resource management, payroll overview, company taxes, cost management and quality management systems".

Through this programme, eight new black-owned suppliers have so far been developed; with current plans to develop five more, to be operational for local production of the new Navara pickup.

Nissan teams from Japan will also work with suppliers here in South Africa, to develop the local component industry through technical support, training and skills exchange.

"We aim to localise more in order to grow South African vehicle production as well as contribute to the transformation of the country's automotive value chain as a whole," says Whitfield.

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