

UMP Construction Project

Strategy: Stakeholder engagement and local economic development

1. Background

The New Universities Project Management Team (NU PMT), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Interim Council (IC) of UMP, have identified an urgent need to develop a strategy through which the project towards the construction work at the UMP will (a) take on board the relevant stakeholders in the Province, and (b) include approaches towards the promotion of local economic development.

The primary aim of the strategy is to ensure the support and continued support for the project by the people of the Province. The experiences learnt from the challenges, community interest, and the continuous interaction shown by the local communities during the renovation work undertaken at the Siyabuswa Campus presents some case for reference.

2. Stakeholder engagement

It is of critical importance that the relevant stakeholders and interest groups are taken on board. The following table presents the suggested stakeholder representations:

Stakeholder Group	No. of representation	Notes/comment
Provincial Government	1	The representative should come from the Premier's Office elected by the Premier
Ehlanzeni District Municipality	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The representative to come from the Office of the Executive Mayor. Each District Municipality also represents its local municipalities and it is thus assumed that information will be communicated through to the local municipalities.
Nkangala District Municipality	1	
Gert Sibande District Municipality	1	
Mbombela Local	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The representative to come from

Municipality		<p>the Office of the Executive Mayor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Local Municipality is to be represented as it the resident municipality of the University.
House of Traditional Leaders	1	The representative to come from the House.
Lowveld Chamber of Business	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One representative to come from each chamber. If the chambers are not representative enough, other chambers would be invited to submit a representative.
Highveld Chamber of Business	1	
Mpumalanga Council of Churches	1	The representative to come from the Council.

The PMT must create a platform which will solely be for information sharing, advice seeking, reporting back and medium level consultation with the identified stakeholders. Scheduled meetings with the stakeholders will have to be held and continuously honoured and adequate information shared with the members.

3. Local economic development

Approaches to cater for local economic development need to be put in place, such as:

- the compilation of a database of local suppliers of services and goods;
- the purchase and use of local goods, suppliers and services;
- creation of internship and work integrated learning opportunities for graduates and students;
- training approaches for sub-contractor service providers and workers;
- establishment of and promotion of cooperatives for future supplier contracts with the University.

4. Public engagement drives

The emphasis should be on communication, communication and communication. The more people seem to **be aware** of what is going on in and around their communities, the better. The development of a communication strategy will be of utmost importance in this regard. While this drive is primarily premised around the construction project, its

communication should be an integral part of the UMP's processes. In other words, the message for the script should include matters on the academic programmes, enrolment information, staffing prospects, other employment opportunities both present and for future, etc. We should guard against dealing with this matter in isolation and thus make it look and sound like a tenders' platform.

The communication drive should target the use of, among others, the following platforms:

- Local prominent radio stations: Ligwalagwala Fm and Ikwewezi Fm.
- Local Newspapers, prominent in the 3 Provincial Regions.
- Government Publications.
- Municipality publications.
- Join the Provincial Government Public Outreach events and share information to the public.
- Organise UMP breakfast meetings with business and industry to share information.

5. Conclusion

A successful stakeholder engagement and local economic development strategy will go a long way in minimizing disruptions, negative perceptions and community hostilities towards the project. It is important that we ensure that the project leaves a positive legacy in the minds of many in the Province and the country in general. The promotion of local content in whichever and whatever manner, without compromising quality and time, will be appreciated and be applauded by many and that should be the driver of this strategy.
