



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

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GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT TO SHINE ON SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES PROGRAMME AT 2ND INTERNATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**), in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) will host the 2nd International Special Economic Zones Infrastructure and Investment Conference at the Durban International Convention Centre in KwaZulu-Natal from 16-17 July 2026.

The theme of the conference will be ***Reigniting Industrialisation through World-class Special Economic Zones.***

The flagship conference will bring together high level local and international investors, and serve as a platform where ideas and innovative solutions will be proposed to facilitate and build vibrant Special Economic Zones (SEZs), as well as ensuring investment in South Africa.

A broad range of stakeholders from across South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including government, business, and international SEZ experts, will attend the conference to share insights on SEZs as a tool for industrial development. More than 1 000 delegates are expected to participate.

The conference will emphasise the critical importance of public-private collaboration in growing the South African economy and cross border collaboration. This is particularly relevant in supporting the implementation of the new Spatial Development Strategy and the acceleration of regional integration through cross border SEZs as part of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA).

The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Parks Tau says that the 2nd International Special Economic Zones Infrastructure and Investment Conference will shine the spotlight on South Africa's SEZs Programme, which he describes as a key industrial policy instrument

aimed at driving economic growth, attracting both foreign and domestic direct investment, accelerating industrialisation and creating jobs.

“The primary objectives of our SEZs Programme include enhancing exports through industrialisation initiatives, and establishing world-class infrastructure, all aimed at creating sustainable employment opportunities in the country. The current administration remains committed to a programme anchored in inclusive economic growth, employment creation, and infrastructure delivery, amongst others,” says Tau.

He adds that the government has identified private investment mobilisation as a central mechanism for achieving growth targets consistent with meaningful unemployment reduction.

The MEC for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), Reverend Musa Zondi, has expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming conference, noting that it presents a strategic platform to drive investment, deepen industrialisation, and unlock new opportunities for inclusive economic growth across the province.

“As the Provincial Government, we remain steadfast in our commitment to positioning Special Economic Zones as a cornerstone of our economic development agenda. We view the two SEZs in KwaZulu-Natal as strategic assets that can serve as catalysts for enhanced competitiveness, sustainable job creation, and expanded trade opportunities,” says Zondi

The conference will culminate in the Special Economic Zones Achievement Awards Gala Dinner that will be hosted by **the dtic** to recognise and reward the commitment and success of the SEZs, as well as the best practices they applied in their endeavours to achieve the objectives and goals of the SEZ programme. The awards will also serve as a benchmark for others to strive for greater success, fostering a healthy sense of competition that enhances the overall output and motivates performance.

Companies operating in the operating SEZs will also get an opportunity to showcase their products to the conference attendees in a two-day exhibition that will take place along the conference.

Media accreditation

Members of the media who are interested in covering the 2nd International Special Economic Zones Infrastructure and Investment Conference are requested to complete the attached media accreditation form in full, and return it to Bongani Lukhele via email: BLukhele@thedtic.gov.za. The closing date for media accreditation applications is 16:00 on Thursday, 25 June 2026.

Media Enquiries

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