

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure to recognise all our partners in the merSETA Viro-Vent Innovation Skills Challenge who contributed to this publication: University of Cape Town, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University KwaZulu Natal, University of Witwatersrand and National Technologies Implementation Platform.

Thank you, Professor Sivarasu, for your leadership of the University of Cape Town for supporting these efforts to find new forms of collaboration that focus on “*Skills for localisation*” and “*Skills for re-industrialisation*”.

This publication comes at a time when South Africa and the world are still recovering from the devastating effects of the covid-19 pandemic complicated by an emerging war in Ukraine. This is expected to continue disrupting social and economic activities, including education, training, and work. The merSETA and its stakeholders are working tirelessly to ensure that training and other skills development activities continue despite these challenges.

This innovation project, among others at the merSETA, utilises existing research and Higher Education Institution (HEI) Infrastructure to stimulate rapid response technology innovation aimed at the development, design and prototype production of a medical device in response not only to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to an economic sector dominated by imports.

To serve the skills development mandate of the merSETA, the project investigates the technology management capabilities or future skills required to accelerate South Africa’s post-covid recovery. The concept of innovation, as vested in this program, is aligned to the merSETA’s strategic intentions, that include:

- i. Supporting skills for Economic Reconstruction, Recovery and Growth,
- ii. Supporting skills for the changing world of work,
- iii. Supporting skills for the growth and sustainability of the green and circular economies and
- iv. Exploring and supporting the role of the mer-sector in the digital economy, as well as
- v. Continuing to strengthen the role of the SETA as an intermediary body

Making informed sector skills planning decisions is the objective of this program. – that is, to understand those future jobs that would drive the localisation of components in a model that could stimulate expanded manufacturing opportunities through relevant skills supply. The merSETA’s Viro-Vent Innovation Skills Challenge anticipates a contribution towards closing the skills gap through a job generation model.

The merSETA remains committed and is looking forward to engaging on how this initiative sees a pipeline of new product innovations expanding the manufacturing sector. We owe it to the citizens of South Africa to find innovative ways of harnessing our young talent into industrial expansion.

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