

23 March 2020

Dear all

Keeping members informed and looking after your interests will be our top priority over the next weeks.

We appreciate business is very challenging and we are here to support you in whichever way we can. We will be releasing regular communication every week and we encourage you to please take heed of the information and advice shared. There is so much information over the airwaves at the moment that we are all feeling slightly overwhelmed. Hopefully this will help you navigate through the chaos. We will also be joining other industry bodies in lobbying Government to provide much-needed relief for many of our members.

Important to note for today:

- **The Department of Small Business Development is establishing a debt relief fund**

This is to help mitigate the impact of the economic shutdown caused by the coronavirus on small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs). It is aimed at providing relief on existing debts and repayments.

For SMMEs to be eligible for assistance under the debt relief fund, the applicant must demonstrate the direct link of the impact or the potential impact of Covid-19 on business operations.

**What do you need to do?**

To strengthen monitoring and avoid abuse, businesses requiring assistance will be required to enrol on the SMME South Africa platform on <http://www.smmesa.gov.za/>

This platform is going live tomorrow, **Tuesday, 24 March 2020**.

Please ensure you enrol your business.

- **Business Growth/Resilience facility**

Alongside the new fund, the department will also be launching a 'Business Growth/Resilience facility' which has been specifically created to enable continued participation of SMMEs in supply value-chains – particularly those which manufacture or supply items which are in demand due to the pandemic.

This facility will offer working capital, stock, bridging finance, order finance and equipment finance, and the amount required will be based on the funding needs of the business.

The RMI will be in touch with the Department to find out more and update you accordingly.