

MEDIA RELEASE

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Oiling the Provincial Financial Machinery with Essential Skills

Johannesburg, Wednesday, 19 June 2013—“The treasuries, offices of the premier, public service administration and other coordinating and monitoring institutions should fulfil their legislative role to guide, support, coordinate and monitor government. The legislatures and Parliament should be scrupulous and courageous in performing their oversight function in order to make an impact in terms of clean administration. At the moment, my assessment is that not all of these role players are playing their part in providing the level of assurance required to create the momentum to improve audit results, and provide comfort to citizens that the public administration machinery is able to operate and monitor itself daily without waiting for external guidance or supervision. We are very encouraged that government’s recent pronouncements dealt with some of the issues my office has been raising in its recommendations towards an improved public service.” Auditor General, Terence Nombembe 12 March 2013.

The excerpt above taken from the Auditor General’s report on National and Provincial Departments audit findings indicate that ‘there appears to be a serious need for more checks and balances in order to achieve better, “cleaner” audit results. One intervention is to skill financial personnel within financial departments at various provinces.

Harriet Amoda, Project Director of AAT(SA) chatted to SAICA about a project being spearheaded by AAT(SA). The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) is one of the world’s leading membership organisations for accounting technician professionals. With over 120,000 members world-wide, AAT has been providing competence-based accounting qualifications in Central Southern Africa for over 20 years.

AAT South Africa, AAT(SA), is a unique partnership between the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). This professional body is dedicated to the education, development, regulation and support of accounting technicians in South Africa.

Currently, AAT(SA) has assisted local government by developing a specifically customised qualifications for personnel in the financial departments of municipalities. Following a call from National Treasury, AAT(SA) was tasked with developing qualifications for provincial government financial staff members. “This involved two Public Service Accounting Qualifications (PSAQ) qualifications: the Public Service

Accounting Certificate (NQF level 3) and The Public Service Advanced Accounting Certificate (NQF level 4),” says Amoda.

Thus far the qualification has commenced in 4 provinces:

Eastern Cape- Rural Development and Land Reform. There are 26 candidates studying toward the NQF level 4 and 49 studying toward the NQF level 3 qualifications.

Northern Cape – Departments of Economic Development; Sport, Arts and Culture; Public Works; Education, Health; Treasury; Social Development; Transport, Safety and Liaison; Environment; Office of the Premier. There are 23 candidates studying toward the NQF level 4 and 77 studying toward the NQF level 3 qualifications.

Limpopo province. There are 20 candidates studying toward the NQF level 4 and 33 studying toward the NQF level 3 qualifications.

Western Cape - There are 17 candidates studying toward the NQF level 4 and 17 studying toward the NQF level 3 qualifications.

According to Amoda the objective of the provincial training is “to provide provincial department employees with much needed skills and to create a solid base of competence among financial staff so as to pave the way for clean audits in the province. This is a joint initiative between AAT(SA) and National Treasury.”

According to Bongani Sandi, Acting Senior Manager: Expenditure Services Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform: Eastern Cape and Champion of the programme in the Eastern Cape, “The programme will equip financial staff in the Department to be in a far better position to make critical decisions that will impinge on financial management. Most of the financial staff do not have the financial skills because they were absorbed by the previous Ciskei and Transkei homelands and the Department is faced with a historical problem. Hopefully, this programme will address this challenge.”

National Treasury and AAT(SA) are currently in discussions with all other provinces and a number of national departments about their start on the programme.

The programme has barely commenced. But judging from the successes of the AAT(SA) local government qualification programme, the provincial government programme looks certain to achieve equally great heights.

Ends

ABOUT SAICA

The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), South Africa’s pre-eminent accountancy body, is widely recognised as one of the world’s leading accounting institutes. The Institute provides a wide range of support services to more than 30 000 members who are Chartered Accountants and hold positions as CEOs, MDs, board directors, business owners, chief financial officers, auditors and leaders in their spheres of business operation. Most of these members operate in commerce and industry, and play a significant role in the nation’s highly dynamic business sector and economic development.

SAICA serves the interests not only of the Chartered Accountancy profession, but also of society in general through its key objective of upholding professional standards and integrity. The pre-eminence of South African Chartered Accountants [CAs(SA)] nationally and internationally attests to the successes achieved by SAICA on a broad global canvas. SAICA's members enjoy the privilege of using the highly regarded and prestigious CA(SA) designation. Members of SAICA are subjected to a Code of Professional Conduct, which provides guidelines for ethical and professional behaviour. Fundamental ethical principles to which CAs(SA) are expected to achieve include:

- Integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Professional Competence and Due Care;
- Confidentiality; and
- Professional Behaviour.

SAICA members serve on international accounting bodies including; the Trustees of the International Financial Reporting (IFRS) Foundation, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), the IFRS Interpretations Committee, the IFRS Advisory Council and the Council of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). SAICA is also a member of The Global Accounting Alliance (GAA).

For more information visit www.saica.co.za

About AAT(SA)

The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) is one of the world's leading membership organisations for accounting professionals. With over 120,000 members, AAT has been providing competence-based accounting qualifications in Central Southern Africa for over 20 years.

AAT South Africa, AAT(SA), is a unique partnership between the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). This professional body is dedicated to the education, development, regulation and support of accounting technicians in South Africa. A focal area at the moment is the South African local Government sector as well as the Department of Rural Reform and Agrarian Reform (Eastern Cape Province) and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (Northern Cape).

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