

Exxaro's EARN Agripreneurs graduate from 12-month programme

Ten Exxaro EARN Lephalale Cluster Agripreneurs recently graduated from the 12-month EARN Agripreneur Development Programme. The programme focuses on capacity building through practical business, technical skills training, coaching and mentoring programmes, as well as other financial and non-financial support.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

The first three months of the programme is known as the Activate Phase and begins with a competitive agripreneur assessment and candidate selection. This is then followed by intensive on-site skills development dedicated to practical business experience as well as insight into the technical nature of agri-business.

During the remaining nine months of the programme, known as the Accelerate Phase, candidates will gain practical experience by completing a one-season growing cycle. This allows them to gain practical commercial production experience while learning on the job. Everything they produce, they sell. In other words, they earn while learning to have enough seed capital when they get onto on own land.

Creating an enabling environment

Says Kobang Maluleka, MD at EARN, "Our goal is to create an enabling environment for African entrepreneurs to grow profitable sustainable businesses that will compete regionally, nationally, and internationally. This will enable our people to earn a decent living, earn independence and respect and earn dignity and pride and that will, in turn, earn the continent the respect it deserves."

To assist in the training, Exxaro's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, through a joint Exxaro-EARN Committee, met regularly to ensure that everything remained on track during the 12-month period.

"The EARN Agripreneur Development programme is an excellent example of community collaboration as it assists in powering better lives in Africa and beyond. We are incredibly proud of the graduates and cannot wait to see how they make a difference within their communities," said Mzila Mthenjane, Exxaro's executive head of stakeholder affairs.

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